Rugby Union Heineken European Cup final; Brive 18 Bath 19

Callard kicks Bath to Euro glory

Paul Hayward in Bordeaux

SO THAT'S what they mean by journeyman: someone who keeps England's No 1 on the bench, wins a psychological duel with a glamorous foreign counterpart and scores every last one of his team's points on the way to winning the European Cup. And to think Eric Cantona might have referred to Jonathan Callard as a "water carrier".

The journeyman had his day, all right. In last Saturday's Heineken Cup final Callard kept the young buck Matt Perry out of the side, mangled Brive's Christophe Lamaison at goalkicking and scored the game's only try in a 19-18 victory. West Country eyebrows were raised when Callard was picked ahead of Perry but they are back in their facial bays now.

Awful match, wonderful drama. There were 41 minutes on the clock in the second half when Bath were awarded a penalty with the score 18-16 to Brive. Callard had been here before — at Murrayfield four years ago with England.

On that occasion he had sent a 40-yarder sailing between the posts to win the Calcutta Cup. This time, with 30,000 whistles besieging his brain, Callard mopped his brow with both sleeves and sent a little slider between the sticks and towards the water-filled moat which passes for a security device in the Stade Lescure.

Nineteen points for the water carrier, and Bath's yeomanry retreated to their own half to see off Brive and the clock. Penalty to Brive: they advanced within kicking range, Lamaison, with 15 points in the match already and 111 in the tournament thus far stepped forward.

This time, though, there was no crisp rocket from Lamaison's boot, just a timid looping kick that fell short and to the right. Lamaison had cracked, and then, with the game still winnable, the outside-half Lisandro Arbizu did too, shipping a drop-kick in front of the posts wide right.

The whistle blew, and Callard ran "faster than I have for 12 years" along the touchline to find the Bath coach Andy Robinson. ("I wanted something soft to land on.")

"JC has been a proven match-winner in all our cup and European games and when it comes to a tight situation and you need someone to make that kick, JC is the man I'd bet my life on," said Robinson as he reflected on a difficult but inspired selection. "Matt Perry will have his time."

"Andy told me I was playing on Saturday night after the Richmond defeat," said Callard. "I'd been disappointed that I wasn't involved, and Andy had explained why that was so. I desperately wanted to play against Brive.

"I've had this before. Every year I seem to get dropped for England internationals or games against Wigan. I know I'm not one of the quickest in the world and people have criticised me for that. But it's about reading the game. I think I've been around long enough to know when to pop up at the right moment or do the right thing. You don't always need speed to affect a game."

Brive, the supposedly mighty gallopers, played bulldozer, percentage, safe, boring rugby. There was no adventure in them, no daring. And the image that will endure for those final dramatic 10 minutes is of Arbizu and Lamaison melting when they needed the kind of ruthless nerve that Callard had shown at the other end.

Callard's reward was to have 5,000 Bath supporters chanting "JC, JC" where earlier there had been only a French cacophony of beating drums and shrieking horns.

This is how Bath's followers know their players: by their initials, as members of the family, almost. Callard has been there nearly a decade.

For him it had started badly, with a missed kick early on which had allowed Lamaison to boot Brive into a 9-0 lead. "The first one I missed was an awful, awful kick," said Callard. "When you get one right, the old stalwarts like Ollie Redman come up and give you a tap on the backside. But this one was so bad he didn't even bother to make eye contact with me."

The flag that he waved so fervently at the end was Bath's ensign raised again after so many difficult months. The banner, in fact, of England's European champions, who may never defend their title because of ongoing discussions regarding the competition's future.

Not that Callard will care just now. Asked the old journalists' question — "Where will you be later, Jon?" — the so-called journeyman, the water carrier, raised a single finger to the sky and said: "Up there."



Cup that cheers . . . captain Andy Nicol holds the trophy aloft for Bath's 5,000 travelling fans after his team's last-gasp victory over Brive in Bordeaux
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID ROGERS

Cryptic crossword by Pasquale

Across

1 Fool on the box is a joke (8)
5 Disappear to have second drink and a chat (6)
9 South American countess protected by British name (8)
10 Put new appendage on sale (6)
12 Box housing oriental weapon (5)
13 Firm has difficult targets for getting people in small houses . . . (9)
14 . . . on account of which staff may be given flats (3,9)
18 Items of electrical equipment for those in the remove class? (12)
21 We get on badly? Such may have to be called in! (2-7)
23 'An Ancient Kingdom' — work of fiction by graduate (5)
24 A sign of the times on the other side? (6)
25 It's a pain having to restrict border plant (8)
26 Cram everything in the night before? On the contrary for this exam (1-5)
27 It's a bore going to Arabic state — you need an interpreter (8)

Down

1 Artist uses length of forearm to hold end of canvas (6)
2 I am not upright, they say, as a woman (6)
3 Batting star torn apart by writer with charity team? (9)
4 Amuse somehow with conduct that's not familiar (12)
6 Overseas character participating in home game (5)
7 Pretence over wasted fuel is deplorable (8)
8 Bill collects two Liberals as a canvasser (8)
11 Supervisor behind the scenes may play a strange game (5,7)
15 Remarkable part of the copper's job? (9)
16 Signs of holiness? Magi sat bewildered with one (8)
17 Something desirable/something tedious, English party? (8)
19 Male personality, headmaster engendering a lot of resistance (6)
20 Gorge from that tin to start with (6)
22 Odd bits from that setter may show stylishness (5)

Last week's solution

Football Premiership: Chelsea 2 Barnsley 0

Chelsea are a glass apart

Martin Thorpe

IF MANCHESTER UNITED can call Old Trafford the Theatre of Dreams, perhaps Chelsea should call Stamford Bridge the Hall of Mirrors. Last Saturday nothing was as it seemed: bad was good and down was up. Even winter left everyone boiling.

Having lost four of their previous seven games, Chelsea were in such deep crisis that the squad was moved to hold a players-only meeting to thrash out the problems. Yet what crisis? This win moved Chelsea up to second in the Premiership.

However, looks can be deceptive. For large parts of this game it was Barnsley, rooted to the bottom of the table, who threatened most, dominating the second half. By the end a stuttering Chelsea, with Gianfranco Zola dropped to the bench, could claim a two-goal victory only because the referee's assistant missed a blatant offside in the build-up to the second.

Never mind, the surreal spirit of Lewis Carroll lived on in Ruud Gullit afterwards as he pronounced himself "especially happy with today's performance" before crediting the "improvement" to the effects of the players' therapy session — "they held their meeting and you saw the result". Or was that the Mad Hatter speaking? When Dennis Wise was asked if the get-together had made a difference, he replied: "No, not really."

But if down was up and bad was good, black was also white as Gullit explained that Gianluca Vialli had been left out of the side recently because of flu. This on the day after Vialli had told Italian newspapers that he had definitely not had flu.

One hoped for some clear thinking from the normally level-headed Barnsley manager Danny Wilson, but instead he produced a tirade against the referee Jeff Winter for a performance that was no more inconsistent, pedantic or pretentious than those of many of his colleagues in recent months. "That was the worst refereeing performance I've seen all season. Inept," said Wilson.

A poacher's finish from the recalled Vialli on 24 minutes and Mark Hughes's scrambled second just after the break was enough to consign Barnsley to yet another defeat.

Meanwhile Chelsea's season sees them not only challenging for the title again but favourites to win the European Cup Winners' Cup and handily placed in the semi-finals of the Coca-Cola Cup. Everything looks rosy again at Stamford Bridge. Or is that just a view through the wrong mirror?

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The Guardian Weekly

Vol 158, No 7
Week ending February 15, 1998

The Washington Post · Le Monde

Bill Clinton and Tony Blair exchange words during a visit to a Washington school PHOTOGRAPH: RICK WILKING

No more lies as Bill and Tony find true love

Martin Kettle in Washington

THE question that the world has been asking for weeks has finally been answered. Yes, Bill Clinton did have a passionate affair in the White House Oval Office. But it wasn't with an ambitious 21-year-old woman. It was with an ambitious 44-year-old man called Tony Blair.

There were no more denials as the starry-eyed couple paraded for the cameras last week. No more evasions as they finally shared their mutual delight with the world. Until recently Mr Clinton has angrily refused to go into any detail about the nature of his affairs. Now the details simply poured out of him. Hillary Clinton and Cherie Blair could only stand dumbfounded.

All the stars came out for the couple at a White House celebration. Sir Elton John serenaded them. Stevie Wonder called to say he loved them. Harrison Ford, who has played at being president, met a real one. So did Tom Hanks, who as Forrest Gump provided a motto for Mr Clinton: "Always try to do the right thing, unless your conscience tells you otherwise."

Earlier we watched as the two men declared their true feelings. "You have invigorated Britain," Mr Clinton trilled. "You have issued an exhilarating call for a proud people whose best days clearly still lie ahead."

Monica Lewinsky, it was revealed, sent Mr Clinton a Valentine via the columns of the Washington Post. Last week he offered Mr Blair a Valentine's poem of his own, quoting T S Eliot. When an older man loses his head to a young love he does and says strange things. So it was with Mr Clinton. "At the end of a century of friendship let us pledge to connect our storied past to the unwritten promise of our future," he enthused.

Then it was the turn of the man who has turned a president's head. "Bill Clinton has said some very kind things about me," the blushing visitor admitted. "Now let me say something about Bill Clinton.

"As the next few days unfold, I know the ties between us will strengthen further," Mr Blair assured us. "We will discuss many issues. We do so with a shared language, shared values and a shared determination to stand up for what is right."

The couple later posed in the Oval Office. American journalists tried to ask questions about Ms Lewinsky but Mr Clinton brushed them aside as though he could now concentrate on what Mr Blair called "a new relationship for a new century".

Meeting of minds, page 6

Most Britons back air raids on Iraq

Alan Travis

A CLEAR majority of the British public backs UK involvement in military action — including bombing raids — against Iraq, according to a Guardian/ICM poll this week.

The poll's main finding of clear support for British involvement in military action (by 56 per cent to 32 per cent overall) is backed up by a majority of the public agreeing that Tony Blair was right last week to give "unconditional support" to President Clinton's strategy.

The first test of British opinion also shows that support for military action by Britain and the US is stronger among men than among women, who fail to give raids majority support. Men back military action by 68 per cent to 24 cent, compared with 45 per cent of women in favour and 39 against.

One big surprise is that young voters — those aged 18 to 24 — give the strongest backing for a military campaign (by 65 per cent to 22 per cent) of any age group. Support for military action appears to decline with age, with those over 65 appearing the least belligerent.

This suggests that the conventional wisdom of the past 30 years — that there is a stronger peace movement among the younger generation — is no longer true. Those now in their early 20s are far more bellicose than their predecessors.

The support for military action will be welcomed in Downing Street, but it is clear that it is nowhere near what it was in a similar Guardian/ICM poll in September 1990, just before the Gulf war, or before the British task force sailed to the Falklands in 1982. The public backed British involvement in the Gulf war by 71 per cent to 19 per cent, and the Falklands task force was supported by 78 per cent.

UN chief steps up pressure for deal

Julian Borger in Cairo and Ian Black in London

KOFI ANNAN, the United Nations secretary-general, intervened on Monday to try to resolve the Iraqi crisis peacefully and avert what he warned would be "devastating" air attacks by the United States and Britain.

As Russia claimed Saddam Hussein was backing down and a new Arab initiative challenged Washington and London, Mr Annan postponed trips to Italy and the Middle East to co-ordinate the intensifying diplomatic attempts to end the stand-off over weapons inspections.

According to the Iraqi News Agency, Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, spoke to Mr Annan by telephone on Monday, though no details were given. The agency said it came "in the framework of continued discussions and contacts".

Speaking as he arrived in Rome for a state visit, President Boris Yeltsin, who warned last week that US air strikes could lead to a third world war, said he believed President Saddam had agreed to open "a number of presidential facilities" for inspection, but gave no details.

In Cairo, the Arab League announced that in co-operation with Russia and France it was putting together a compromise to break the deadlock. The league's secretary-general, Esmat Abdel-Meguid, outlined a proposal for a new UN panel to inspect the eight presidential palace compounds at the heart of the controversy. Sixty more "sensitive" sites would be open to the UN Special Commission on Iraq (Unscom) — but for two months only.

The proposals are clearly unacceptable to the US and Britain, who are threatening air strikes if Iraq does not comply with UN resolutions and grant unconditional access to the weapons teams.

"There are some interesting elements in what's emerging from Baghdad but — and it's a big but — there is still some way to go before UN requirements are met," one British official said this week.

But the proposal could pose problems for Washington and London by crystallising Arab and European opposition to force and by providing an alternative course with widespread support in the Security Council.

Canada's prime minister, Jean Chrétien, said on Monday that his country would join military action if diplomacy failed. Australia followed suit. But France, Russia and China have declared their total opposition to the military option. Russian and French diplomats are seeking a compromise over the "presidential sites" which Baghdad has ruled off-limits to Unscom.

The Arab League plan is a blow to US-led efforts to rally support, or at least to mute opposition, in the Middle East to the possibility of large-scale bombing of Iraqi targets.

The US defence secretary, William Cohen, speaking in Kuwait, the only Gulf state so far to volunteer the use of its airbases for military strikes, said diplomacy must be given every chance to succeed, but added: "The window of opportunity is getting narrower."

US officials meanwhile announced the dispatch of 2,500-3,000 ground troops to Kuwait as part of contingency plans to defend the emirate.

King Hussein of Jordan met Tony Blair in London on Monday. He said afterwards: "I don't think I would support action that would affect the people of Iraq . . . The people have suffered enough."

The Desert Storm commander, General Norman Schwarzkopf, joined the tide of opposition to air strikes when he warned that the US risks another Vietnam. He predicted that sustained bombing would have no effect on President Saddam's defiance of the UN disarmament regime and might smash the fragile international coalition against Iraq.

President Saddam, the general told NBC television, "wants the sanctions lifted, and if the coalition fractures he has a good chance of having the sanctions lifted. So he may not mind a big strike."

Martin Walker in Brussels adds: The US and Britain face a challenge from France and Russia as the alliance convenes its new partnership council with Russia and eastern European states in Brussels this week.

The crisis, which has put intense strain on Nato, deepened amid conflicting claims that Turkish troops were entering northern Iraq to contain an expected flood of refugees from a bombing campaign.

Martin Woollacott, page 12

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 500	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80

Bombing Iraq would only leave a legacy of hatred

ALTHOUGH most people in the West would be delighted to see Saddam overthrown or even killed (West heads for showdown with Iraq, February 8), there are other factors that we would be wise to take into account when considering what action should be taken.

Unilateral military action is contrary to the United Nations charter. France, Russia and China are all opposed to such action and it would therefore be illegal in international law. The Arab world is also strongly opposed to a renewal of the war, and the so-called Gulf Coalition has now fractured, leaving us on our own. Even Iran does not now want to see its neighbour bombed.

One of the factors which has altered world opinion has been the horrific human toll arising from the sanctions, which have cost the lives of at least half a million Iraqi children; another million are believed to be starving, according to UN estimates. Nor should we forget that, in the 1990 war, the bombs dropped were the equivalent of seven Hiroshimas, and Saddam survived. It must be questionable whether more limited bombing now would be any more effective.

We would do well to look back on the history of the West's relations with Iraq. Few people are aware that Britain actually used chemical weapons against Iraq in the 1920s, and, as recently as 10 years ago, the United States was supplying anthrax to that country.

When I visited Saddam just before the Gulf war broke out, he indicated that the US ambassador had actually hinted that the occupation of Kuwait would not cause problems to Washington, and, in that sense, he gave the impression that he himself felt he had been betrayed by his friends across the Atlantic.

This sense of betrayal extends even more strongly to those Arab countries which gave their backing to the UN action when the war broke out — for they were assured that, in return for their support, the Americans would use their best efforts to help resolve the Arab-Israel dispute. Since then, the US has been seen to do nothing about the continuing negative policies followed by the Jerusalem government in their relations with the Palestinians.

The bombing, if it starts, will leave Britain and America dangerously isolated and vulnerable to violent reactions in the Muslim world.
Tony Benn MP,
House of Commons, London

I HAVE no quarrel over Blair or Clinton's view of Saddam Hussein. What concerns me is the seemingly unthinking view that bombing and military action will stop the thrust of Iraqi policy.

Can we have the answer to three crucial questions? First, how will bombing and its inevitable civilian casualties secure changes in Iraqi policy? Second, assuming that Saddam is assassinated, what guarantee is there that his successor, possibly another Takriti, will be more willing to comply with UN resolutions? Third, assuming a destabilised Iraq is achieved, what will be Blair's or Clinton's attitude to the inevitable increase in Iranian and, possibly, Syrian power?

We need more accurate information before entering into another ill-defined and reactive war.
Jeremy Ross,
London

MEMBERS of the UN inspection team from the US are not acceptable to Saddam, so why should not alternative experts be used? This would reveal Saddam's real position, or could even be a face-saving move for both sides. Furthermore it would enhance the UN's reputation and prove that the organisation is not entirely dominated by the US.

An alternative would be for the US to withdraw voluntarily, not as a sign of weakness but as a gesture of confidence in an objective process and not a political manoeuvre.

Surely no war should be embarked upon without every possible alternative being explored.
Patricia Knowles,
Birmingham

Charity reserved for Christians?

THE INTENSE and uncharacteristic controversy surrounding the execution of Karla Faye Tucker demonstrates exactly why the death penalty in the United States needs to be abolished immediately.

Although most of Ms Tucker's backers insisted that their support was based on her rebirth and dedication to Jesus Christ and not gender (a large percentage of the support came from the religious right, a group usually fanatical in its support of the death penalty), practically none of this support has ever been shown for any of the condemned men who have made identical and demonstrable changes in their lives.

More troubling are the begging questions concerning support for other forms of spiritual rehabilitation. Could the same support be found for any condemned person, male or female, who had found a sincere calling to the principles of Islam, a group that includes a large percentage of the minority population on death rows across the United States? Does anyone really believe these same supporters would be at all concerned if the accused had found meaning in Buddhist or Baha'i teachings? And are we to accept the default implication that an atheist's life, no matter how rehabilitated, is less valuable than that of a Christian?

Since these biases are as undeniable as they are untenable but will always be a major factor in deciding who dies and who lives, the only fair and humane solution will be to abandon this nation's attachment to state-sponsored killings. The rest of the world should take note and speak out accordingly.
James L Beathard,
Ellis Unit, Texas Death Row,
Huntsville, Texas, USA

Robustly built to suit the Titanic

IN HIS review of Titanic (February 1) Richard Williams says that Kate Winslet is "too fleshy to be convincing as . . . someone Dawson would fall for". While everyone may have their own preferences in female body types, this remark is particularly inappropriate. Someone who worries about an anachronism in Rose's deportment while descending a staircase should appreciate that in 1912 fashionable female body types were distinctly more robust than today's ideal.

I would further put in a plea for no more reinforcement of the destructive contemporary idea that to be beautiful a woman must be as thin as a rake. Young women today suffer enough from this notion, as statistics on anorexia and bulimia attest.
Liz Knox,
Meriden, New Hampshire, USA

I FEEL I must signal my distress at Richard Williams's review of Titanic. While he pays due tribute to director James Cameron's "technical trickery", he describes Kate Winslet's figure as "too fleshy".

I for one found the heroine's tonnage, both fore and aft, neither too bulky nor too waif-like. Perhaps Mr Williams confused his praise for the "technical trickery" with his opinion of Ms Winslet.

"Lit by pale sun, the clean lines and elegant angles ravish the eye while the . . . vast, dark bulk . . . inspires a proper awe" would appear to be a much fairer description of the young actress's figure than that of the doomed liner.
Marcus Thornley,
Vicenza, Italy

The answer lies in the cell

TIM RADFORD (Unravelling the secrets of ageing, January 25) is in danger of misleading your readers. He states that the ageing of the brain and many other parts of the body is due to cell division and the loss of telomeres at the ends of chromosomes. The fact is that brain cells and many other cells never divide during our life span, so cannot lose their telomeres. Most scientists who study ageing believe that it is these non-dividing cells, rather than dividing ones, which are largely responsible for ageing.

Moreover the investigation he cites does not prove that dividing cells age through telomere loss. The research reported is work in progress. So far it indicates that cells provided with a mechanism for maintaining telomeres have an extended life span.

There are several ways of extending the life span of such cells, and one of these was discovered in my laboratory here in Sydney. It is entirely conceivable that the cells which maintain their telomeres will die out for other reasons. If this happens, the telomere theory of cell ageing will have been disproved, but one wonders whether such a result would receive the same publicity.
(Dr) Robin Holliday,
Sydney, NSW, Australia

A fleet of many nationalities

CHRISTOPHER ZINN (Australia fights battles of the past, February 1) overlooks the fact that there has never been an accurate re-enactment of Australia Day.

The non-English contingent of the First Fleet of 1788 has always been studiously ignored. The Museum of Sydney makes no mention of the Irish, Welsh, Scots, Channel Islanders, North Americans, Jews, Africans, Madagascans, Swedes, French, German, Norwegian, Dutch, West Indians — not forgetting the six Chinese sailors on La Pérouse's ships — with everyone "meeting" in Neutral Bay.
Bill Clements,
Wagga Wagga, NSW, Australia

Briefly

MEXICO CITY'S decision to replace its 87,000 taxis with compressed-air-powered vehicles (In with a healthy air, February 8) is hopefully not only the beginning of the end for the internal-combustion engine in urban transport, but the end for that white elephant, the electric car. Batteries are heavy, inefficient and the most consistently unreliable component in any car.

About half the energy put into a battery never comes out again. The car itself may be zero-pollutant, but upstream lies an appalling energy loss. Compressed air, by contrast, is a beautifully efficient and reliable means of storing and using energy.
Chris Jones,
St Albans, Hertfordshire

I WAS wondering why it took 18 months to get my grandfather an important implant in his eye whereas the Queen Mother gets a new hip in a matter of minutes?
Mark Bailey,
Bristol

PAUL THEROUX'S review of Nansen: The Explorer As Hero (February 8) mentions that Nansen was seconded to serve as a diplomat and dealt directly with Lenin.

It may interest readers that Nansen's assistant was Vidkun Quisling, who later became a Nazi collaborator. It was while serving in the Soviet Union under Nansen that Quisling developed his extreme nationalist and anti-Bolshevik ideology.
Michael Mills
Phillip, ACT, Australia

THE United States may have its morals wrong when it crucifies a president over an alleged extramarital affair between two consenting adults. Better to examine the Clinton/Congress welfare reform package, which has endangered the lives of single women and their hungry children, to see who is truly the casualty of an illicit indecency.
Joshua Gross,
Copenhagen, Denmark

BERNARD RICHARDS can take heart that among those poor spellers at Oxford (Don spells out students' inadequacies, January 25) there may be another Jane Austen who couldn't spell words such as "niece" or "necessary", or another Charles Darwin, who couldn't spell words like "school".
Ken Watson,
Rozelle, NSW, Australia

MAY I, on behalf of non-cricketing long wave Radio 4 listeners, send a word of appreciation to the groundsman and staff at Sabina Park (Pitch stops play, February 8)
Jim Golcher
Towcester, Northants

The Guardian Weekly
February 15, 1998 Vol 158 No 7

Annual subscription rates are £49 United Kingdom; £55 Europe inc. Eire, USA and Canada; £63 Rest of World.
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'Demagogue' Mandela hits back at critics

David Beresford in Johannesburg

NELSON MANDELA answered his critics last week with an up-beat speech depicting South Africa as a country finally getting to grips with the legacy of apartheid.

Opening parliament for the last time before he retires from the presidency, he avoided the racial rhetoric which has drawn criticism in recent months. He also extended an olive branch to the press, congratulating newspapers which "uncovered the scoundrels . . . who prey on the public purse".

Mr Mandela was speaking at the end of a week in which South Africa's Democratic Party, representing the liberal opposition, launched an attack on him and the ANC, accusing the president of "racial demagoguery" and the liberation movement of promoting racial division.

The attack comes as the country was absorbing an assault on Mr Mandela's reputation by Brian Walden on BBC television. In a documentary broadcast in Britain last week and given wide publicity in South Africa, Mr Walden described Mr Mandela as "incompetent", accusing him of destroying black nationalism for more than a decade, prolonging apartheid rule and mismanaging the country since coming to power.

Mr Mandela told parliament in Cape Town that his government should be judged by its success or failure in improving the lives of "the most vulnerable sections of society" — such as the poor, the old and disabled — who were the "primary victims of the iniquitous system from which we have just emerged".

Last year the government had provided supplies of "clean and accessible water" to 1.3 million more South Africans; built or upgraded more than 500 clinics; and taken a primary school feeding scheme to 4.9 million children. More than 400,000 electricity connections last year meant that 58 per cent of South Africa was now electrified.

He conceded that the government was well short of its target of building a million new homes in five years, but 1,000 houses were being started or completed every two-and-a-half days.

Mr Mandela also insisted that there had been a "marked" reduction in serious crime since the ANC came to power in 1994.

He touched on the race issue only to defend controversial legislation for "employment equity", enforcing affirmative action, which is due to come before parliament this year.

In foreign affairs, Mr Mandela said the country had underlined its commitment to Africa. Exports to African states had increased by 70 per cent since 1995, and imports had risen by 60 per cent. Asia had become South Africa's second largest continental trading partner, it was starting to exploit the "huge potential" of Latin America, and had established a "strategic relationship" with China.

Germany turns screw on refugees

Ian Traynor in Bonn

THE international effort to force nationalist leaders in Bosnia to reverse the results of ethnic cleansing was stepped up last week when Germany pressed the Serb-held half of Bosnia to open its doors to tens of thousands of Muslim refugees expelled from their native areas in the 1992-95 war.

Bonn's pressure on Milorad Dodik, the new moderate prime minister of Bosnia's Serbian Republic, is part of a concerted Western campaign to effect the large-scale repatriation of refugees this year. A parallel ultimatum was given to the Bosnian Muslim leadership to open Sarajevo to Serbs and Croats who left the city during the war and forfeited their property rights.

United States and European Union officials in Bosnia, equipped with new powers to issue ultimatums, set deadlines and impose decrees against the will of recalcitrant Bosnian politicians, have elaborated a promising carrot-and-stick strategy for reintegrating the country. The repatriation policy is central to that effort.

Last week the international community's High Representative in Bosnia, Carlos Westendorp, made further use of the powers given to him in December by overruling the quarrelsome parties and deciding the design of the new national flag.

Last week Bosnia's president, Alija Izetbegovic, was given two weeks to revoke 1995 legislation stripping departed Serbs and Croats of their property rights in Sarajevo. US and EU officials have insisted that 20,000 Serbs and Croats should be resettled in the capital by the summer.

Pursuing a separate prong of the same strategy, the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, told Mr Dodik that many of the 250,000 Bosnian refugees in Germany must be allowed to return to towns and villages in the Serb half of the country. Most of them are Muslims.

A third of the Bosnian population — 1.5 million — fled the war and about 400,000 have returned in the past two years, including 100,000 from Germany. But only 35,000 have moved into areas where they form an ethnic minority. The lack of movement has entrenched the ethnic partition.

The plan is to make Sarajevo a showcase by leaning on the Muslim authorities to restore its earlier ethnic balance and harmony and then increasing the pressure for similar action by the hardline Serb and Croat nationalists.

Mr Dodik, for the first time since the end of the war, voiced a readiness to allow Muslim refugees to return to Serb-held areas. Germany and the EU are prepared to reward such efforts with substantial economic aid. So far Serb areas have had less than 5 per cent of the international aid going to Bosnia.

Mr Izetbegovic promised that Serbs and Croats were welcome in Sarajevo, but said parallel action was needed in the new Bosnian Serb capital Banja Luka.

Le Monde, page 15



Imelda Marcos is embraced by a supporter in Manila last week after announcing she would stand for president PHOTO: ROMEO RANOCO

Imelda joins election fray

Claire Wallerstein in Manila

IMELDA Marcos crawled down the aisle of Manila cathedral on Sunday and collapsed sobbing at the altar after launching a bid for the presidency with a promise to bring back "dignity, decency and leadership" to the Philippines.

The widow of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos was accompanied by hundreds of supporters as she made her way through the cathedral after joining an already crowded presidential race at the eleventh hour.

The former beauty queen, aged 68, is now almost blind and likes to portray herself as a penniless philanthropist who has been unfairly pilloried for the excesses and human rights abuses which characterised her husband's reign. She had lost everything "except my sacred honour", she said.

The supreme court recently upheld a 12-year jail term against her for corruption. One of her few remaining options to avoid incarceration would be a presidential pardon — easy to arrange if she were voted into high office.

Her chances of winning the May election are slim, although she is a popular congresswoman.

As campaigning got under way, analysts warned that the political manoeuvrings of Mrs Marcos and many other candidates violate a constitutional provision designed to prevent the rise of another dictator.

The 1987 constitution, drawn up after the fall of Marcos, requires congress to outlaw the powerful, and often corrupt, political dynasties that have maintained a stranglehold on public life.

But a glance at the electoral line-up shows that these dynasties are still strong. About 50 per cent of outgoing mayors have "anointed" their wives or children as their successors. The Osmen — one of the country's most powerful families — are fielding candidates for president, vice-president and senator.

Mongolia rebuffs UN help to end 'serious food deficit'

Louisa Waugh in Ulan Bator

MONGOLIA'S *nouveaux riches* carry mobile phones, drink expensive imported beers and fill the wide streets of the capital Ulan Bator with their BMWs and Mercedes. But in the suburbs, where the quality of water, education and life has deteriorated sharply, families must make do on less than $8 a month.

A report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) says Asia's newest democracy faces a "serious food deficit" and needs 90,000 tons of food aid to combat widespread malnutrition. It recommends emergency and programme food aid to compensate for a shortage of flour.

The Mongolian government, hoping to present sound economic credentials to lure foreign investors, is unhappy with the report.

But aid workers say the facts speak for themselves. One in four Mongolian children is now chronically malnourished, leading to cases of mental retardation and severe rickets. A per capita income of $320 a year makes Mongolia one of the poorest countries on earth, and low-income families are spending up to three-quarters of their funds on food.

The government has been reluctant to comment on the FAO's recommendations, although the agricultural ministry has privately admitted it is seeking food aid donors. The United States has already donated 11,000 tons of flour.

Cereal production has halved since 1990 and many flour mills are operating at half capacity. Officials say the government is to increase cereal imports from last year's 85,000 tons to ease the shortage.

Bill Bikales, a senior economic adviser to the prime minister, Mendsaihany Enkhsahan, criticised the FAO report as "inexcusably misleading".

He said the country did not need investment in the still partially subsidised crop sector, but rather "an effective, targeted safety net". Hunger in Mongolia was not due to a shortage of food but to some people's want of money to buy it, he said.

Otto Farkas, director of World Vision, which works with some of the country's poorest, agreed with Mr Bikales's point that purchasing power was the key to combating malnutrition. But he added: "Mongolia needs food security, including food aid . . . Domestic production shouldn't be sacrificed on the altar of the free market economy."

Research by World Vision and the Mongolian Nutrition Research Centre recommends food supplementation and food aid programmes aimed at the poor. It says one in five children is stunted from malnutrition, more than 10 times the norm in a well-fed population.

Death from malnutrition is particularly prevalent in the country's prisons, where families must pay for inmates' rations. The 320 deaths in jail last year — 5 per cent of the prison population — were widely blamed on tuberculosis and/or starvation. There have been reports of guards cutting prisoners' rations to buy uniforms and equipment.

Quake kills thousands

Raja Asghar in Islamabad

AFGHAN officials said on Monday they had buried more than 3,800 people killed by a severe earthquake on Wednesday last week in remote northern Afghanistan.

Bad weather hampered relief efforts with only a small aircraft from the International Red Cross and a plane-load of blankets from Pakistan landing more than two hours' drive from the quake site in the opposition-ruled Takhar province.

The relief agency Médecins sans Frontières, in the first foreign estimate of casualties, confirmed on Monday Afghan statements that more than 4,000 had died.

Authorities in Taloqan, in Takhar, said the earthquake was centred on the city of Rustaq and had destroyed more than 20 villages. The region affected is in the grip of a bitter winter. Its few roads have been badly damaged by the civil war.

Swedish seismologists said the quake measured 6.1 on the Richter scale, but a Pakistani centre measured it at 5.6.

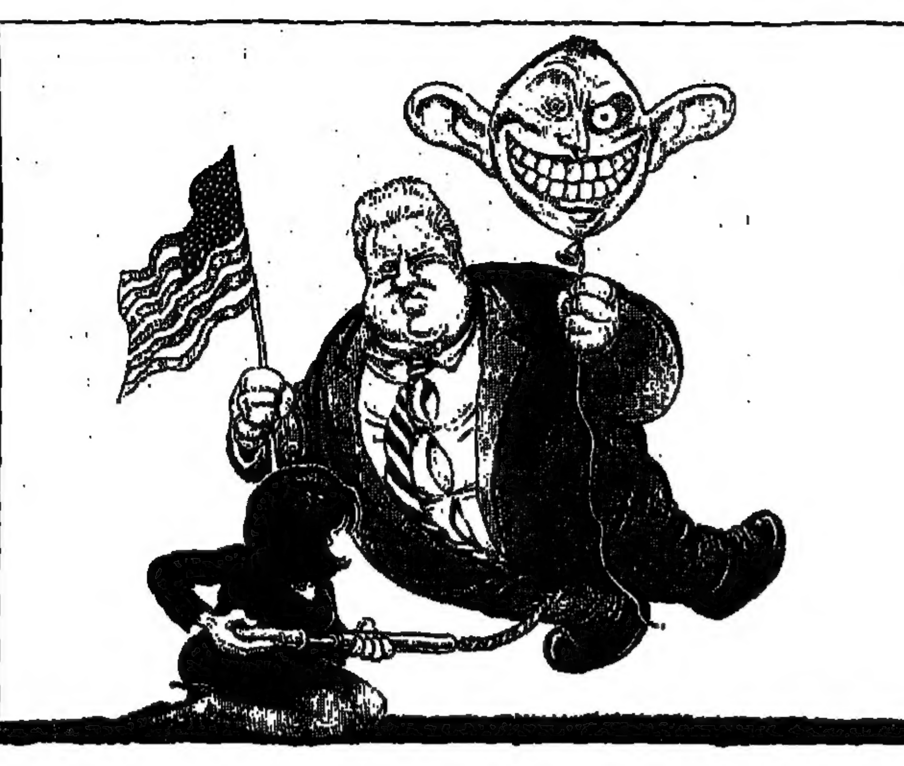
Taliban ordered its forces to halt operations in Takhar. —*Reuters*



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 15 1998

Clinton fits the bill in Blair's new world order

WASHINGTON DIARY
Martin Kettle



SO MUCH guff has been written over the years about the Anglo-American "special relationship" that one tries instinctively to avoid using such an overused and hubristic phrase. And yet, as the philosopher said of the elephant, it may be hard to describe but you know one when you see one. And in Washington last week we undoubtedly saw a special relationship.

Tony Blair was interested in Bill Clinton before Clinton became interested in Blair. From the moment that Clinton emerged at the head of the nomination-chasing pack in 1992, Blair spotted something that he knew he could learn from. Most of the comment which picked up on Clinton's appeal for the Labour modernisers at that time focused on the Democrats' campaign techniques — the spin doctoring, the media strategy, the focus groups and so on. But Blair's take on Clinton was always strategic, not tactical. What struck Blair about Clinton was that he had managed to halt the forward march of the transatlantic right.

Blair believed that Clinton's victory in 1992 showed both that it was possible to outsmart the right and also to defeat them. These were powerful lessons for a Labour politician at the end of 1992, when Labour was still traumatised by its failure to defeat John Major in that year's general election. And Blair has always willed Clinton to succeed and to survive ever since, believing that Labour's task of persuading the British electorate to eject the Conservatives would be easier if its leaders could say that the Americans had already done something similar.

Between 1994 and 1996, Blair was extremely anxious about Clinton's re-election. Not because Clinton was a personal friend — at that stage he wasn't — but because Clinton's defeat in 1996 would have been presented by the Conservatives as proof, and might even have actually shown, that a modernised centre-left government had nothing lasting to offer the electorate in the modern world. Clinton's successful re-election was a very great relief to Blair, and Blair unquestionably believed that his own defeat of Major last year was made much easier because the Democrats still controlled the White House. It meant that Labour seemed to be cutting with the grain of world opinion.

This, far more than any other factor, explains why Blair was the perfect ally to stand by the side of a beleaguered Clinton in Washington last week. The two men may now be friends, but in Blair's eyes, Clinton's survival is overwhelmingly a political rather than a personal imperative. Never once during the Washington visit did Blair even imply that he believed Clinton to be a good man in his private life. He conspicuously avoided saying that he believed Clinton's denials of an affair with Monica Lewinsky. In every other respect, however, Blair stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the president, extolling his leadership, commending his policies, identifying with his ideas and promoting Clinton's campaign to defy his attackers.

Blair did this because he still remains absolutely clear in his own mind that Clinton's tenure of office was an essential precondition and is now an essential buttress of his own. It was this, rather than any other factor, which led him to say, at last Friday's highly charged press conference in the White House East Room, that Clinton was "someone I could trust, someone I could rely upon, someone I am proud to call not just a colleague, but a friend".

It was this, too, that explained Blair's most emotive gesture of solidarity during his stay — his toast of Clinton at the White House banquet the night before. In that toast, Blair quoted Harry Hopkins's biblical remarks to Churchill in the midst of the second world war: "Whither thou goest I will go, and whither thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Then Blair continued: "And Hopkins paused, and then he said, 'Even to the end', and Churchill wept."

Blair doesn't see himself as Churchill, and he doesn't believe in the Anglo-American historic destiny to rule and educate the less fortunate world. He simply regards Clinton as his best and biggest international ally. At the moment, the emphasis in this alliance is all about supporting the besieged Clinton presidency, as it was in Washington last week. Now, though, it will shift to Iraq, the central event of the coming days.

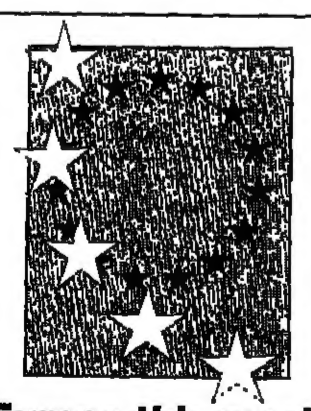
For Blair, the Iraq crisis is about three things: his genuine belief that Saddam Hussein has to be prevented from waging war, particularly against Israel; his need to show any domestic doubters that he is a Labour leader who will not flinch, as his predecessors might, from sending British troops into combat (Blair is on the verge of becoming the first Labour leader to send British forces into an non-imperial engagement since Attlee in Korea nearly half a century ago); and, finally, his abiding and determining belief that a Democratic president has to be supported internationally in order that a Democrat will be re-elected at home. This, I think, is the starting point of it all.

That may be how he sees it, but many will have a different view. They will see yet another British prime minister (Ted Heath was really the only modern exception) who appears overkeen to sit like a parrot on the shoulder of yet another US president. They will see the hubris in the over-eager striving to appear on a par with a demonstrably more important but personally embarrassed leader. They will sense that Blair has turned his back on Europe in favour of America, as so many of his predecessors, both Labour and Conservative, have done before.

Perhaps, in the end, that is how it will eventually appear to history too. But it is much too early to draw that conclusion. Blair and his advisers are sensitive to the charge that they are simply interested in buying off-the-peg campaign techniques and social policies from the US in much the same way that earlier British supplicants in Washington bought weapons.

In an interview with the Guardian last week, Blair laid out his hopes of bringing the American Democrats and the European social democratic parties together in a standing policy network to hammer out common responses to the social changes caused by the global economy. His plan is not simply transatlantic, he suggested, but international. If that is true, Blair's ultimate goal is to put the special relationship at the service of something much more ambitious and much less one-sided.

Cavalier spirit stirs parliamentarians



Europe this week

Martin Walker

CHRISTA Randzio-Plath is a ginger-haired socialist lawyer from Hamburg who at first sight appears an unlikely heir to the Pyms and Hampdens who fought to establish Parliament's authority against King Charles I in the years before England's civil war. Their campaign established both the legitimacy of the elected and power over the public purse, which has been the foundation of parliamentary democracy.

From her crucial seat as chairman of the European parliament's monetary sub-committee, Randzio-Plath has launched a campaign which could eventually prove as important. This is not only because she is asserting the claims of parliament over the economic policies of Europe, but also because her campaign can exploit the discreet revolution that is now under way in the European constitutional system.

The European Union at first glance looks like a rough copy of the American division of powers between the executive in the White House, the legislature in Congress, and the judiciary in the Supreme Court. Europe has its elected parliament, its executive in the Commission, and its own European Court of Justice, which has been essential to building the common market. However, on to this structure Europe has grafted the Council of Ministers, which is where the governments of the 15 member states meet and take the real decisions.

Now a new body is being grafted on to the constitutional system, the new European central bank (ECB). Americans have noticed how, under Paul Volcker and Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Board has assumed an authority that the Founding Fathers never envisioned. The Fed's power just grew and grew. In contrast, the ECB's powers have been built in from the start: to be independent of political influence, and to have the single task of ensuring monetary stability.

The ECB's president and board, nominated by member governments and endorsed by the European parliament, are to have fixed terms of eight years to guarantee their independence. Their powers are immense, not only to fix the monetary policies of Europe, its money supply and interest rates, but to play a global role as custodians of a currency which seems likely to rival the dollar as a store of international value.

Enter Randzio-Plath. The European parliament last week called for a series of amendments that include the power to veto and, if necessary, to dismiss the president of the new bank, in what promises to be a steep uphill battle to impose democratic accountability over the managers of the single currency.

If granted, the MEPs' list of demands, from quarterly appearances by the bank board before parliament, to suggestions that summaries of the minutes of board meetings be published, would give parliament a sweeping extension in its authority and power. It is unlikely to get it soon because, though bankers and finance ministers constantly pledge full consultation, there are two principles they are unlikely to surrender.

First, the bank's primary task is monetary stability and the avoidance of inflation, rather than growth or job creation. Second, the bank's president and board are picked by the governments of member states, not the European parliament. Both principles are enshrined in the Maastricht treaty.

"Actually, we don't have any powers at all," Randzio-Plath admitted last week after launching the draft report from the parliament's monetary committee. It is, however, the opening shot in a long campaign which some MEPs see as their equivalent of the British parliament's centuries-long struggle with the Crown over financial control.

There are, however, three key differences between the House of Commons of the early 17th century and the current European parliament. The first is that the European parliament's own credibility is only shakily established. Scandals over MEPs' abuses of expenses, their blithe disregard of the rule that says they should list their private financial interests, and the dismayingly low turnout of voters to elect them, sap its authority.

The second difference is that the European parliament may have veto power over the EU budget, but it does not have the crucial right — which was the key to the campaigns of Pym and Hampden against the Crown — to authorise taxation. The third difference is that the European parliament is battling not only the bank but Europe's elected national governments and its finance ministries as well.

It is for this reason that Randzio-Plath's deputy chairman of the monetary committee, Britain's Labour MEP Alan Donnelly, has formed a new group called the Euro Forum. This cunningly brings together MEPs and members of the finance committees of the various national parliaments, in an alliance of the elected to bring a double influence to bear on the appointed members of the bank's board.

With its new powers of co-decision with the Council of Ministers enshrined in the Amsterdam treaty, the parliament can expect in the long run to win greater accountability. But much will depend on the new central bank's skill in managing the single currency, the euro. The first battle front will be the clash between the bank's duty to prevent inflation and the political imperative to free Europe from its straitjacket of mass unemployment. Randzio-Plath has served warning that the European parliament intends to seize its historic opportunity.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Davis falls on his sword over Camelot controversy

PETER DAVIS resigned as regulator of the National Lottery in the wake of a successful libel action by Richard Branson, Britain's best-known capitalist, who claimed that Guy Snowden had tried in 1993 to bribe him to drop his bid to run the lottery on a not-for-profit basis.

In the event, the contract to operate the lottery went to Camelot, a consortium in which G-Tech, an American company of which Mr Snowden was chairman, has a 22.5 per cent stake. Mr Snowden quit his chairmanship following Mr Branson's victory.

Mr Davis had survived earlier demands for his resignation when he was found to have accepted free flights and hospitality from G-Tech. He insisted that he had done nothing improper. This time, however, he went, following a long interview with his boss Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary. The Tories claimed that he had been sacked; Mr Smith insisted that he had resigned.

The flurry of departures reflected public unease about the handsome profits made by Camelot, by virtue of having made the lottery such a success. Mr Smith now says that, when Camelot's franchise period expires, he would like to see it replaced by a non-profit operator. So Mr Branson's Virgin Group may still be in with a chance.

There will, however, be some awkward problems to overcome. When competitive tenders are next invited to run the lottery, Camelot will still hold a strong hand because it already has the outlets, the equipment (provided by G-Tech) and the staff to do the job.

What the Government sometimes likes to call "the people's lottery" will still, in effect, be a state-licensed monopoly. And any organisation capable of mounting that kind of operation would have to invest heavily in organisation and computer terminals and would be entitled to recover the investment out of profits.

LORD IRVINE, the self-important but unelected Lord Chancellor, overstepped the party line when he suggested that the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) should be given powers of "prior restraint" to prevent the publication of stories which it deemed not to be in the public interest. By this means, he considered, newspapers could be banned from revealing undesirable stories such as the one about the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and his live-in mistress.

The Lord Chancellor's thinking infuriated the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who was otherwise occupied in Washington. "We do not have a scheme for banning stories that are legitimate," said Mr Blair's spokesman. "I do not know anyone other than Derry Irvine who thought the Robin Cook story was other than a legitimate one to write."

This was the strongest put-down yet for the Lord Chancellor, who has made a series of miscalculations in recent months but remains close to the Prime Minister because he was his mentor and head of chambers when the young Mr Blair embarked on his legal career.

Much of the anger in government and party circles was directed at Lord Irvine — denounced as pompous, bullying, interfering, arrogant, censoring and puffed-up — for resurrecting the Cook affair just as it appeared to be ebbing away.

LABOUR could face another backbench rebellion over its plans to water down legislation on workers' rights and to use Tory laws to crack down on strikers. More than 80 MPs were reported to be ready to vote against the Government.

The dispute surfaced in the prison service, where officers were told by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, that the legal ban on industrial action in prisons, imposed in 1994, would remain in place. Union leaders accused him of reneging on pre-election promises to restore their rights.

The main row centres on a manifesto pledge to restore union recognition "where a majority of the relevant workforce vote in a ballot for the union to represent them". Unions argue that the result should be determined by a simple majority among those taking part in the ballot, while employers' organisations claim there should be a majority among the entire workforce, regardless of whether they vote. The two sides have failed to reach a compromise.

SOME CABINET ministers were furious about being ordered by the Prime Minister to stay away from World Cup football matches in order to stop the Tories from accusing them of enjoying the trappings of office. "Tickets are hard enough to come by without having stands full of Cabinet ministers travelling at the taxpayers' expense," said a Blair spokesman.

ARTHUR SCARGILL, miners' leader and class warrior, will have the irony of seeing his daughter married off this year to a former colliery manager who helped to shut down Grimethorpe, Britain's most famous pit.

Margaret Scargill, a doctor, will marry James Logan, whose colliery office was once sealed with superglue by his prospective bride's mother, Anne, during a long and bitter campaign to save the pit.






Healthy option . . . Bart's will continue as a specialist heart and cancer centre PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

Bart's hospital is granted a reprieve

David Brindle

THE historic St Bartholomew's hospital in the City of London will be saved, ministers said last week after accepting the recommendations of an independent review of the capital's "under pressure" health services.

Bart's, founded in the 12th century, will continue to treat patients as a specialist centre for cancer and heart conditions.

However, it will lose its role as a general local hospital, and its accident and emergency department will not reopen. Among other decisions emerging from the review are that closure of the A&E unit at Guy's hospital, south London, is to go ahead, and that Queen Mary's hospital, Roehampton, will be run down and replaced by a small community unit.

The review, headed by Sir Leslie Turnberg, a past president of the Royal College of Physicians, was set up by Labour to help it deal with issues that had bedevilled the last government.

The Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, said that the review's proposals were accepted in full. "The Turnberg report recommends that Bart's should not close. The Government agrees. We will not countenance the closure of that great hospital which has served the people of London for 875 years."

Closure of Bart's was proposed by the Tomlinson report in 1992 and set in train the following year by the Conservative government of John Major. The A&E department has shut and its other services were due to transfer to the Royal London in Whitechapel.

The review says that this should still happen once a new, 900-bed Royal London is built in seven or eight years' time, but that Bart's should thereafter provide "a small number of tertiary services" and perhaps also run a minor injuries unit.

Campaigners who have been battling to save Bart's welcomed the decision — even though it fell far short of their original goal.

Dorrie Snell, who chairs the Save Bart's Patients' Campaign, said: "The hospital has always been excellent in heart specialities — in fact it is the best in the world. I am now very optimistic about the hospital's future."

The closure of Guy's A&E unit is likely to prove tricky for ministers, as Labour claimed during the general election campaign that it would be "stopped on day one of a Labour government".

Dobson pledges to cut illness gap

Sarah Boseley

THE Government firmly pledged last week to tackle the big social issues — poverty, bad housing, unemployment and other forms of deprivation — that it acknowledges to be at the root of inequalities in health.

In a green paper released for consultation, most of the 27 targets set by the Conservative government in its Health of the Nation document in 1992 — and which returned to haunt ministers whenever figures showed they were not being met — are gone.

Labour's blueprint sets four benchmarks for improving public health: on cancer, strokes, accidents and mental health. There are no targets for reducing teenage pregnancies, smoking or obesity.

Instead, the strategy is to devolve responsibility for targeting specific problems, such as high rates of child mortality, to areas where they occur. "The top priority in Camden Town or Wigan or Gloucester or Loughborough may well differ from the top priority in Surrey," the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, told the Commons.

Mr Dobson declared war on "the greatest inequality of all": the growing gap between the health of rich and poor.

The green paper, Our Healthier Nation, shows that a man in Manchester lives five years fewer than a man in Oxfordshire, and death rates from lung cancer are 20 per cent higher in the North than the national average.

The previous government had banned all mention of inequalities in health, Mr Dobson claimed. "Well, things have changed. We do recognise inequalities in health . . . this government recognises that poverty, poor housing, low wages, unemployment, air pollution, crime and disorder can all make people ill in both body and mind."

Public health would now be an issue for many government departments, such as employment, transport and environment, he said.

The Government has two key aims: to extend people's lives and the number of years people spend without illness, which has not risen as fast as longevity; and to improve the health of the worst off in society. The public health minister, Tessa Jowell, said it marked an end to the "nanny state" approach of the last government. "In the 1970s and particularly the 1980s we saw the growth of individualism, victim blaming and finger wagging, and if you were ill it was do with your unhealthy lifestyle."

The green paper proposes a "national contract for better health" between government, local authorities and the individual. Ten health action zones will be set up. Around £300 million of National Lottery money will finance healthy living centres. These might have fitness facilities and services such as physiotherapy, preventive programmes and information for all age groups.

The document got a warm welcome for making the link between poverty and ill health, but there were those who wanted to know what extra money the Government was prepared to put in, and many questioned the scrapping of targets.

Karen Caines, director of the Institute of Health Services Management, said: "Without measurable targets there will be less pressure for change and less scope to hold [the Government] to account. The real problem in public health has always been not what is wanted but how it is to be achieved."

Roy Taylor, president of the Association of Directors of Social Services, regretted that the issue of alcohol abuse was not addressed.

Shake-up urged after child sex trial

Duncan Campbell

CALLS were made for a full review of juvenile trials after the acquittal last week at the Old Bailey in London of four boys aged 10 and 11 for rape and indecent assault, the youngest ever to face such charges in Britain.

Children's organisations claimed that the court was the wrong place for such hearings and urged a review of the system.

Three boys, two aged 10 and one 11, were acquitted of rape and indecent assault on a girl aged nine at a London primary school last May. A fourth boy was acquitted of indecent assault.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) defended its decision to bring the prosecutions. A spokeswoman said: "It was a complex case which was reviewed at every stage."

The spokeswoman added that the CPS had been in regular consultation with the police and treasury counsel. Because of the seriousness of the charge, she said, the case had to be held at the Old Bailey, which acted as the crown court for youth cases in the catchment area.

The Metropolitan Police issued a statement stressing that the case had been handled with "thoroughness and sensitivity".

The calls for a review, from both the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Children's Legal Centre, have come because of uneasiness felt about the process of children as young as that appearing in a high-security, high-profile court such as the Old Bailey.

Carolyn Hamilton, director of the Children's Legal Centre, said such a trial should not be repeated. Both the location and the system under which the children were tried was wrong.

"I have grave doubts whether children of that age can understand what is going on in the court and can concentrate for that length of time," Ms Hamilton said. "I don't think it's suitable or appropriate for them to appear at the Old Bailey. We need to think more about the adversarial approach and whether it is right both for the victim and the accused."

She said that although people are meant to be tried by a jury of their peers, it was clear that a verdict would not be entrusted to a dozen 10-year-olds. However, the accused and the victim of the same age were meant to be able to understand the proceedings.

The NSPCC has also expressed its concern about the trial. A spokeswoman said: "The NSPCC believes that a formal adult court setting is an inappropriate place to deal with children, whether they are victims, defendants or witnesses."

Anti-Murdoch vote in Lords

THE Government suffered an embarrassing defeat in the Lords on Monday when 23 Labour rebels voted to outlaw Rupert Murdoch's newspaper price-cutting tactics, *write Ewen MacAskill and Michael White.*

The peers protested that Mr Murdoch's Times had ruthlessly undercut its competitors in a campaign that threatens the survival of the Independent and the diversity of the British press.

The Government, anxious to avoid conflict with Mr Murdoch, fought the ban and will have to overturn it in the Commons. While Tony Blair can easily do this with his huge majority, he faces another revolt among Labour backbenchers.

A spokesman for the Department of Trade and Industry said: "The Government will consider the implications of the vote and how to advise the House of Commons."

Although Mr Blair has successfully wooed Mr Murdoch and either won over or neutralised the papers he owns, many Labour backbenchers remain hostile, remembering what the Sun newspaper had done to Labour in the past. They will use the Commons debate to express their anger.

In a debate on the Competitions Bill, which aims to protect companies from unfair practices, the peers voted for an amendment by Liberal Democrat Lord McNally which prohibits a newspaper from abusing its dominant position in the market. The ban includes selling papers below the marginal cost of production on a persistent basis.

Lieutenant Mel Rees, left, and Lieutenant Sue Moore, right, will scuttle centuries of male supremacy at sea next month when they become the first women to assume command of a Royal Navy warship. The officers, both aged 26, will each take charge of a fast patrol boat

Divorcees may have to pay to see children

Anne Perkins

DIVORCING parents may have to pay to see their children, the Social Security Minister, Frank Field, indicated this week in a move which delighted the critics of the Child Support Agency (CSA) but which legal experts said was unsustainable.

Although he told MPs: "You can't tie access to maintenance", sources afterwards indicated that Mr Field, the man charged with "thinking the unthinkable" in welfare reform was attracted to the idea that "if you're paying for your child you should have the right to see it, and if you're seeing it, you should pay".

Speaking in a Commons debate on the much-reviled CSA, Mr Field said that at the moment the parents with care were doing a trade with their estranged partners, claiming less maintenance but denying access to the children.

Officials at the Department of Social Security said Mr Field was "thinking aloud" and that no decisions had been taken; Mr Field was not directly involved in it. But when Labour was in opposition Mr Field conducted a series of reviews as chairman of the cross-party social security committee, and it is a matter he has studied closely.

At the moment the courts will not link maintenance and access, insisting that if the welfare of the child or children is paramount, financial considerations must be secondary.

Mr Field also indicated that abolition of the CSA was not an option, even though, in a devastating assessment, he admitted that the agency was a failure which had "inflicted damage" on many people's lives. He promised to bring forward plans for reform by the summer.

Since 1993, when the agency was established, protests by angry parents at what they felt was an arbitrary, unjust and anonymous system forced continual alteration of the maintenance formula.

Mr Field said the system could be simplified by linking rates of maintenance with tax bands.

Youth and Verve top poll

Dan Glaister

A COMPARATIVE unknown with just two hit singles and an acclaimed album under his belt, this week beat off competition from the heavyweights of British pop to win the best British male artist award in the Brits.

Finley Quaye, whose soulful reggae vocal style has been compared to Bob Marley, won the award against the likes of Gary Barlow, Robbie Williams, Paul Weller and Sir Elton John.

The best British female artist award also produced a surprise with the young soul singer Shola Ama taking the prize. Both artists were also shortlisted for best British newcomer, which was won by Stereophonics.

As expected The Verve carried off the awards for best British group and best British album. They also took best production.

Visitors to the event were met by the traditional Brit item: a protest. Outside the London Docklands Arena, protesters from Polygram Records waved a large banner complaining that they were underpaid. They were protesting on behalf of CD packers who are paid £3 an hour.

Inside there was a protest of a different nature as the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, had a bucket of ice water emptied over him by a member of the audience.

The evening's entertainment was provided by Tom Jones and Robbie Williams who performed a duet in a medley of songs from the film The Full Monty, which won the Best Soundtrack Award.

Williams did a good impression of a gyrating leather-clad Mick Jagger while Jones had to dodge the customary knickers thrown from the audience.

Veteran rockers Fleetwood Mac brought the evening to a close, playing a medley of their hits following receipt of the award for lifetime achievement.

The Spice Girls, who dominated last year's ceremony, won an honorary award for "exceptional commercial success".

As predicted, their new rivals, All Saints, took the best British single award and the best video award for their hit Never Ever.

Another special award went to Elton John, who missed out in the best British single category for his Candle In The Wind '97.

Receiving the Freddie Mercury Award for contributions to charities in the music industry from the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, at a reception filmed earlier in Washington, Elton John provided the evening with its customary element of surprise.

His offer to present Mr Blair with the Elton John Dolly Award met with some disbelief.

Picking a dolly up from a table in the White House, Sir Elton told him he would like to present him with the mat, which he had spent all his evenings sewing.

In Brief

THE Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, moved to defuse growing alarm among the disabled over the Government's welfare plans by announcing new measures to assess the financial circumstances of claimants before benefits are cut.

POLICE in many parts of England and Wales are in effect operating a policy of decriminalisation with regard to possession of cannabis, according to new figures showing a nine-fold rise in cautions from 1985 to 1995 but only a two-fold rise in the number of prosecutions.

THE Government said it would have to vet all new varieties of genetically-modified oil seed rape in a move which effectively blocks for years the planting of such crops. The decision follows protests from environmentalists, government agencies and newspapers.

FORTY-FOUR per cent of children suffer anxieties because of their parents' health, according to the British Heart Foundation.

BRITISH Airways launched an investigation after the body of a male stowaway was found in the undercarriage of a jet that had flown from Baku in Azerbaijan to Gatwick airport.

BRIAN Freeman, an aid worker in Romania, was told he will not face charges following accusations that he "sexually corrupted" a nine-year-old girl near the Sinaia orphanage where she lives.

THE cost of living in London has rocketed, making it the 10th most expensive city to live in, according to a survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

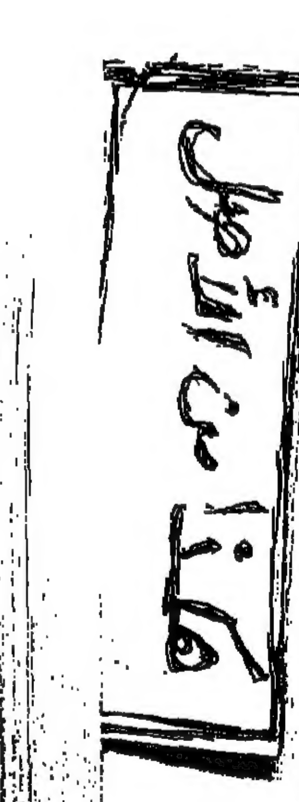
BALLOONIST Andy Elson and his team-mates Bertrand Picard of Switzerland and Wim Verstraeten of Belgium failed in their bid to fly around the world when the Breitling Orbiter 2 balloon came down in Burma after initially being refused entry into Chinese air space.

HELEN FIELDING won the British Book Awards Book of the Year for her novel Bridget Jones's Diary.

ENOCH POWELL, the maverick politician seen by some as one of the greatest free-thinkers of his generation and by others as the man who contributed most to poisoning race relations in Britain, has died, aged 85.

Comment, page 12
Obituary, page 26

Correction
A photograph of a mural in Derry in the February 8 issue was wrongly captioned. The mural showed a young nationalist with a petrol bomb in the 1969 Bogside clashes with the RUC. It did not depict the 1972 Bloody Sunday killings as stated.



Labour hoists jobless total

Seumas Milne

THE Government is to publish an internationally recognised monthly measure of unemployment which will push up the official jobless total by around 500,000 from April, after more than 18 years of bitter argument about "fiddled" dole figures.

The new statistic, an International Labour Organisation measure culled from the official Labour Force Survey, is currently at 1.85 million, and will be released alongside the existing benefit claimant count, which has fallen below 1.4 million.

The Government's decision, following a review by the Office of National Statistics, was given an enthusiastic welcome by the Trades Union Congress, the Liberal Democrats and the Unemployment Unit (UU) pressure group, which did so much in the Tory years to discredit repeated changes in the calculation of unemployment.

A total of 31 "adjustments" to the jobless count cut well over 1 million from the official figure, which if it was still calculated on the pre-1979 basis would currently be 2.67 million. The previous administration also encouraged dole claimants to shift to incapacity and sickness benefits to bring down the unemployment numbers.

The existing count records only those who are unemployed and eligible to claim the Jobseeker's Allowance, which imposes stringent means tests and availability for work tests, and excludes the under-18s and over-60s.

The ILO-recognised Labour Force Survey (LFS), by contrast, records all those who are unemployed, actively seeking work and available to start work in the next two weeks. Based on a continuous survey of 60,000 households, it picks up around 1 million people not covered by the claimant count.

But even this widely-accepted measure excludes more than 2 million people, many of them women, who do not have a job and would like to work. That "wide definition" LFS measure of unemployment now stands at 4.24 million.

The employment minister, Andrew Smith, said he hoped the move would help "restore public confidence in figures that had become widely discredited".

Paul Convery, the UU director, argued that the broader LFS measures should also be published monthly, "so we can see if the welfare-to-work approach is succeeding in bringing people back from the margins into the active labour market".

Councillors told to stamp out sleaze

Anne Perkins

CORRUPTION among councillors must be stamped out, Tony Blair said last Sunday as he added the modernisation of local government to his project of modernising Britain.

With a series of Labour sleaze cases in local government threatening to tarnish the party nationally, the Prime Minister said: "I know corruption is not widespread, but one case is too many."

As the party — once dogged by tales of "loony left" political correctness in local government — prepares to defend a record number of council seats in May, Mr Blair put cleaning up local government at the heart of his programme to revive local involvement and restore respect.

Speaking at Labour's local government conference in Scarborough, Mr Blair promised to implement many of the recommendations from the Nolan committee's report on conduct in local government, including a "model" national code of conduct. It will be up to local councils to introduce their own code, but it must include a system for investigating independently all allegations of malpractice. "Councillors and officials who are incompetent, or worse still corrupt, not only undermine their own claims to leadership, but tarnish the reputation of local government," he said.

Mr Blair also tried to persuade the audience of councillors and local party workers to welcome the idea of directly-elected mayors.

He tried to beguile councillors with a portrait of a new role for them too: "Instead of spending your time in fruitless meetings, you will be able to scrutinise in detail what council leaders are doing. Not wasting time in meetings will mean you'll be able to spend more time in your local communities."

But he warned councillors they could not expect the automatic return of powers taken away during the past 18 years of Tory rule unless they embraced change.

Mr Blair berated local councils for low turn-outs at elections. "The claims of local councils to speak and act for local people are too often weakened by their poor base of popular support," he said, pointing out that nearly half of all councillors are over 55, and both women and ethnic minorities are underestimated.

Gold stars on the wane

Vivek Chaudhary

A BIT of encouragement from teachers is more effective than giving pupils 10 out of 10 for their homework, or even a gold star. But if a gentle word fails to get even the laziest of pupils going, then how about getting them to assess their own work?

A report published last week says teachers should stop marking schoolwork because it demoralises many pupils, and abandon competition in the classroom, such as the handing out of gold stars for those who do well.

The report, compiled by Paul Black and Dylan William of King's College, London, claims that getting pupils to assess their own work and teacher feedback can improve average achievement by as much as two GCSE grades per pupil.

Professor Black, architect of the first proposals for National Curriculum testing and assessment, said: "If you have a competitive culture in the classroom it's fine for those who do well but demoralising for those who don't. It leads to pupils concentrating on competition rather than on their learning needs."

The authors of the report, Inside the Black Box, looked at 600 international studies on the effects of marking and positive feedback on pupils. They claim pupils who are given feedback and encouragement do much better than those given marks out of 10.

The report adds: "Pupils who get poor marks are led to believe they lack ability . . . so they 'retire hurt', and try to build up their esteem in other ways."

The report also claims that the Government's emphasis on testing in schools, and school league tables, is counter-productive "and only helps reinforce low-achieving pupils' sense of failure".

A spokeswoman for the National Union of Teachers said: "Things like gold stars, little badges and house points are used in a positive way by teachers and encourage good behaviour and hard work . . . You can't have children marking their own work. It just wouldn't work."

● *A new framework of national tests to measure children's learning at almost every stage in primary school was announced by the Government. Allied to plans to introduce "baseline" testing to measure the capabilities of children when the start primary school at five, the new framework will leave six-year-olds as the only age group to escape national examination.*

Figures that appeared to show that most poverty was temporary were 'misleading' PHOTOGRAPH: JED MURRAY

Most poor 'are stuck in poverty trap'

Anthony Browne

POVERTY in the UK is far more persistent and deep-seated than was previously thought, according to a new report this week.

Poverty became more widespread under the Conservatives but it was argued that it proved temporary for most individuals, who went on to find work and rise up the income ladder. Figures often quoted by the Tories showed that half of those in the poorest 10 per cent income group were not there a year later.

But research by Professor John Hills, of the Research Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion at the London School of Economics, shows that this figure is misleading.

"You can overplay the significance of income mobility," he says. "The vast majority of the poorest are actually fairly well stuck in poverty."

In his paper "Does income mobility mean we can stop worrying about poverty?" he says that although half of those in the poorest 10 per cent of society might not be there a year later, almost all "are either not moving very far, or are coming back very quickly".

The vast majority of those in the poorest group are unable to escape the trap. They are either persistently poor, or at best strike it lucky for just one year before slipping back down again. Others might be cycling in and out of poverty, never escaping it permanently.

This greater understanding of the dynamics of poverty should help the Government formulate policies to tackle social exclusion, according to Hills. "Welfare to work is helpful, but not a panacea," he says. "You don't solve the problems just by getting people into first jobs — and it doesn't cover pensioners, the disabled and lone parents with young children."

— *The Observer*

Jackson puts her foot in it

SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

TORIES claim to find something irresistibly funny about Glenda Jackson MP. Partly it's jealousy; they don't like to think that someone wealthy, successful and even glamorous should be on the other side.

With her two Oscars, Ms Jackson brings a whiff of stretch limousines and white tuxedos. No one will ever ask Norman Fowler to mould his handprint at Graumann's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood.

But mainly, I think, it's the contrast between her image as a sassy, sexy, wise-cracking film star and the earnest sobriety she brings to her work as a minister. In her public life, she lacks a sense of humour, and there are few human qualities which are quite as comical as that.

Last week she was answering questions in her role as junior transport minister. Anne Campbell (Lab, Cambridge) asked what steps she was taking to improve facilities for pedestrians.

"I," she said solemnly, "chair the Walking Steering Group."

Tories hugged themselves with glee. "The Walking Steering Group!" one or two of them repeated, with Bertie Woosterish brays.

Ms Jackson looked up disapprovingly. "The Walking Steering Group will help local authorities in the integration of walking with other transport modes."

Some Tories now began to shake with laughter, and I felt quite tickled myself. It's the jargon, reflecting the desperate desire among people with just a little bit of power over our lives to turn the simplest human activity, such as placing one foot in front of an other, into something vague, intangible and pompous.

Ms Jackson said proudly that the Government was proposing to spend £85 million on walking in the next financial year. Thomas Brake (Lib Dem, Carshalton) called attention to the lack of a "national strategy on walking". The Tories now began to wheeze dangerously, like an old-fashioned steam engine on the point of exploding.

Instead of replying thus: "What in the name of the Lord is a national strategy on walking? Are we supposed to put videos through every letterbox to show people how to do it? Do you want Walking Awareness Weeks? How about a Walking Ethnic Outreach Programme Director in every borough (£56,000 pa plus car?"), she replied with the same grave solemnity: "In my talks with the Walking Steering Group I understand that there is a shared agenda and it is possible to move forward."

This was all much too much for the Tories, who began to collapse. But Ms Jackson was not finished.

Rosie Winterton (Doncaster C) mentioned the fury of people walking through thick clouds of smoke from decrepit old vehicles.

"Yes, traffic commissioners should publish Smoky Hot Lines," said Ms Jackson.

Ah, Smoky Hot-Lines, the great country singer whose hit "Ah Belch Ma Onion Supper While Ma Rig Is Belching Smoke" reached number 37 in the Country & Western chart some years ago.

Car pollution 'costs £11 billion'

Paul Brown

TAXES on motorists should be tripled to reflect the true cost of road transport, which adds £11 billion a year to health bills because of exhaust pollution, according to the British Lung Foundation.

It recommends a return of purchase tax on larger-engined vehicles, like the fashionable but gas-guzzling four-wheel-drives, but says big rises in petrol and diesel prices are the fairest way forward.

Most of the costs of motoring are in the purchase price of the vehicle, road tax and insurance, but the cost to the country is in the pollution caused when people drive, says the report, compiled by David Pearce. To reflect the real cost of this, and to deter people from driving, the tax should be loaded on to the fuel they use. This would also encourage the use of smaller, fuel-efficient cars and leave room for less tax on gas and electric-powered vehicles.

Prof Pearce, from the Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment in London, specialises in calculating the real cost of pollution and destruction of amenities such as clean water, air and forests. He says they are treated as "free goods", with no financial penalties for industry and the motorist when the rest of the population is deprived of their benefit.

It is difficult to put a price on clean air, but by measuring the health effects and the willingness of people to pay to avoid the suffering caused by pollution, Prof Pearce arrived at the £11 billion figure.

The report says 38 per cent of the population are susceptible to air pollution. Those most at risk include children, people with respiratory and coronary disease, pregnant women, older adults and a group of people called "responders" who are allergic to pollution.

Research has shown that the more polluted the city the higher the death rates from cardiac and respiratory disease. In the United States death rates were 37 per cent higher from these causes in the most polluted city compared with the least. The death rate in London increased by more than 10 per cent in a four-day smog episode in December 1991.

The £11 billion bill is almost equally split between the extra premature deaths and increased illness. If congestion, accidents, road damage and global warming are added to the costs of motoring they reach a staggering £45.9 billion. Road users only pay a third of this sum in taxes.

Malcolm Green, president of the British Lung Foundation, said: "It makes economic and health sense to clean up the air in our cities as an urgent priority. Government and individuals must work together to end our love affair with the car."

Traffic is predicted to rise up to 87 per cent over the next 30 years. Although vehicles are producing fewer emissions, this will be more than outweighed by their number, and the distance people drive.

Diesel vehicles, which are expected to triple over the next 10 years, emit 100 per cent more particulates — poisonous, microscopic particles — than petrol engines. These are the single most important cause of premature death.

BSE delay 'led to infection of extra 60,000 cattle'

James Meikle

SIXTY thousand cows might have escaped BSE infection if vets had acted as soon as the disease was first identified, a member of the Government's advisory body claimed this week.

The 14 months delay before scientists made a formal diagnosis could have had a "very, very significant effect" on the size of the epidemic, and the amount of infected meat entering the food chain, said Roy Anderson, Linacre professor of zoology at Oxford university.

Twenty-three people have died from new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, "human BSE", now linked to the eating of infected beef, and more than 170,000 cattle have died from the cattle disease formally identified by the Central Veterinary Laboratory, Weybridge, in November 1996.

But a BBC2 television series, Mad Cows And Englishmen, made with the co-operation of the Ministry of Agriculture, claims that Carol Richardson, then a pathologist at the laboratory, first discovered evidence of a cattle disease similar to scrapie in sheep in September 1985.

The diagnosis was made on a sick cow from a farm near Midhurst, West Sussex, where the alarm was first raised at the end of 1984.

The later formal identification came as a result of investigations into two outbreaks, one in Kent. Scientific experiments were launched and ministers were informed about the new disease the following summer. A ban on the use of animal protein in cattle feed, thought to be the main source of infection to cattle, was introduced a year later in June 1988.

Professor Anderson said: "Given that there was a slight delay during the exponential growth phase of the epidemic, the phase in which it is growing very rapidly, early intervention can have a dramatic effect on the course and this particular period, 1987 and 1988, was a period when the epidemic was growing extremely rapidly.

"Therefore, intervention 12 or 14 months earlier would have had a very, very significant effect if it had taken place."

It has been held for some time that cows were dying of BSE long before the formal identification. The BSE outbreak is expected to die out by about 2001. More than 2 million cattle have been killed because no animal over 30 months' old can be sold for human consumption.

Nigerian scam cheats Britain out of billions

Christopher Elliott

THE letter arrives marked "strictly confidential". It contains an urgent business proposal from a high official purporting to be with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.

"I have in my capacity the sum of $23.2 million [£14.5 million], which was actually generated from an over-invoiced contract sum in my Corporation. Right now, I write to solicit your assistance in the transfer of this fund into your account."

And the punter is, perhaps, hooked.

That letter is one of a million that police last week estimated were sent by criminals from West Africa, mostly Nigeria, last year. They are part of an advance fee fraud (AFF) that starts by promising to divide the spoils but ends with the punters gulled into sending amounts up to $50,000 to finish the deal. They never see the cash again.

The growth of the fraud, often used to finance crimes such as international drug dealing and illegal immigration rackets, has prompted the formation of a special squad based at the National Criminal Intelligence Service's London headquarters.

Even charities have been sucked into the scam by means of a different style of letter promising that the organisation is the beneficiary of a will.

The new squad estimates the fraud costs the UK at least £3.5 billion a year. "In 1997 over 68,000 AFF letters from these groups were handed to police, and we believe there are many more in circulation. People should not reply to them."

Police estimate that of every 100,000 recipients, about 1,000 respond and 10 send money.

A pilot scheme involving the squad, which began on October 31, has already led to 25 arrests and the recovery of 26 kilos of cocaine, 95 stolen credit cards, five forged passports, and five cheques with a face value of $544 million (£333 million) in two months.

The formation of the squad is backed by the Nigerian government, which is concerned at the effect on the nation's image abroad as the problem has mushroomed over the past 10 years.

How people are conned

A TYPICAL advanced fee fraud takes the form of a letter purporting to be from a high official in the Nigerian central bank or a state company who has managed to over-inflate a contract, generating a personal profit.

In return for helping to smuggle the money out of the country, the recipient is offered a percentage, and is assured no money will be requested.

A flurry of faxes and calls cross the continents, building up a relationship. Often it is suggested that the punter travels to Nigeria to clinch the deal. Once the victim is drawn in, requests are made for legal and administrative fees.

Sometimes the punter is told to destroy the paperwork as the Nigerian police are on to the plot. The eager punters ask if there is anything they can do. "$50,000 would help to bribe the police".

The money is never seen again.

Readers may have been puzzled by the words CURRENTLY SUPPRESSED that appeared over the advertisement below in last week's edition. This was a production error. Apologies to The Fry Group

Towards a better global economy

THE ASIAN crisis has given greater urgency to the debate over the social dimension of global trade. While the region was booming, complaints about the neglect of minimum labour standards could be brushed aside as a covert assertion of Western protectionism. It was hard to question an economic miracle even if a few heretics thought it too good to last.

Now there is a new understanding that miracles for some can quickly turn into nightmares for many. Unemployment in Indonesia has doubled since last year to more than 8 million — in a country that does not provide welfare for those out of work. In South Korea, the unions have accepted some unemployment benefits in exchange for lay-offs: a million may soon lose their jobs. China now concedes that the competitive position of its own low-wage export industries may be affected. And last week, from his Olympian heights, the World Bank's president, James Wolfensohn, spoke of his concern for "the social side — the issues of unemployment, poverty, migrant labour". When Jove is uneasy, it really is a crisis.

At a conference in London this week organised by One World Action, new possibilities opened out for the post-miracle age. One positive outcome of the crisis — as Glenys Kinnock MEP observed — is that links are beginning to be drawn between economic health and good governance. The myth of a set of special Asian values which keeps undemocratic hierarchies in power has been punctured along with the miracle. Whether the system is called *chaebol* or crony capitalism or simply corruption at the top, it stems from a lack of political accountability. The argument that improving workers' rights in Third World countries will weaken their competitiveness also looks more shaky. If an unfettered market for labour is the solution, why has it failed so dismally? We now see that an international trading system that sets one work force against another can easily set in motion a spiral of devaluation and shrinking markets.

If this debate is to be productive, it must not become trapped between the rigid extremes of protectionism and globalisation. The global market exists in hard fact. The question is how to regulate it and prevent the damage it can cause to hundreds of millions. The argument that globalisation helps raise wages — because foreign companies can offer better conditions — is only a partial truth. It also obliges local employers to offer worse conditions in order to compete. What has happened in Asia strengthens the argument for social clauses monitored by the International Labour Organisation, while sanctions are provided by the World Trade Organisation. As Britain's trade union leader, John Monks, said on Monday, the one international body speaking for workers should acquire more, not less, authority in a still inequitable global age.

Spawned in the US

SHOULD Uncle Sam be the proprietor of the Internet? No one doubts that the world-wide computer system providing instant communications and access to unprecedented sources of information is an American invention. The United States not only built it but US industry dominates almost every part of it. Americans make nearly all of the "routers", servers and the fibre optic "backbone" of the system as well as most of the software. Although crucial parts, such as the World Wide Web, were devised by others, the industry has the Stars and Stripes written all over it.

Last week the US government published plans for the privatisation of unique Net addresses — of the kind guardian.co.uk — without which communication would be impossible. This was a slap in the face for the European Union, which wants this — and lots of other problems — settled by means of an international charter managed by an international body based in Switzerland. Last week the EU published its own proposals and insisted that a global approach was necessary. It intends to convene a round-table conference later this year to work out a non-legally binding approach that all countries can live with.

An international agreement is vital if only to stop the Internet disintegrating into turf wars between rival incompatible standards of the kind that split the television and video recorder businesses years ago. Instant communication demands that users have unique addresses which have to be allocated on an international basis. There is nothing wrong with the US proposals as such (they include adding new domain names such as .shop and .firm to the existing ones such as .com), it is just that the US believes international standards are fine as long as they are American. Last week's document presumed that the Internet was a fiefdom of US law. It isn't. It is now a global community and new regulations ought to be drawn up in the spirit of the communitarian philosophy which spawned it.

Domain names are only the first of a series of vital decisions to be made to accommodate the explosive growth in electronic trade expected over the next few years. The global market place won't be able to function properly if European versions of electronic cash use different technical standards to American money. E-mail exchanges will be impossible if people around the world can be awarded exactly the same address. Disputes about intellectual property will never be resolved unless everyone agrees to a solution which won't necessarily be an American one. The US is understandably reluctant to let go of its offspring. But if the Internet is to fulfil its enormous potential, it must.

Lethal lapse

THERE was no last-minute reprieve for Karla Faye Tucker. The standard procedure for this type of execution is for the condemned prisoner to be placed in a supine position on a construction called a gurney and strapped down. A nurse inserts an intravenous needle with a plastic catheter. At a signal, a cocktail of chemicals is administered to induce unconsciousness, to halt breathing, and to stop the heart.

The details are a reminder that all execution is degrading and inhumane. Whether it is less horrible than other methods is not relevant. Nor is the gender of the person being executed. The case put to the Supreme Court by Karla Tucker's lawyers did not rely on her being a woman. It complained that she had been denied the chance to plead for her life in person. Most tellingly, all 76 clemency requests in Texas since 1993 have been rejected. How could an appeal under such circumstances be regarded as fair?

Yet the issue of lethal injection still has to be watched carefully: a recent report from Amnesty International warns that its use may become more widespread and — because of the false belief that it is more humane — could actually act as a barrier to reform of the death penalty. Last year China became the first country outside the US to use the method. The first such executions may be imminent in Guatemala and the Philippines. Lethal injection also requires medics to infringe their ethical obligations. The search for an "ideal" way to kill someone is not the sign of a humane society.

Flawed politician

HE ONCE said all political careers end in failure — and his own was no exception. He served in the Cabinet for one year only, spending decades in exile from his own party. And yet the death of Enoch Powell has stirred a bigger response than his curriculum vitae alone would ever suggest. Britain's leaders have lined up to pay tribute to the scholar, soldier, poet and rhetorician. The Prime Minister was effusive: "However controversial his views, he was one of the great figures of 20th century British politics."

There is something not quite right about a Labour leader mourning Enoch Powell in this way. Tony Blair would have been well within the bounds of good taste to have described some of his views as misguided, wrong or even repugnant. And Britain's ethnic minorities might disagree with the word "great" after his 1968 rivers-of-blood speech that legitimated extreme nationalist and racist politics in Britain for the following 15 years.

What should be mourned instead is the lack of such idiosyncratic, free thinkers in today's politics. In Powell's day, the likes of him, Michael Foot and Tony Benn could reach the centre of public life. Now if they exist at all, they are confined to the margins, edged out by the pager-wearing ranks of party loyalists. We may not lament the passing of Enoch Powell the man, but the independence of mind he personified is surely a loss.

Middle East in need of tough US approach

Martin Woollacott

THERE can be no disguising the fact that we are dealing with fearful possibilities in the Gulf. Remote it may be, but what conceivably threatens there is that worst of 20th century nightmares, a war of mass destruction. How else can we read Saddam's vow to "wage the greater jihad, Israel's announced determination to retaliate in full against any strike on its cities, or America's announcement that its response to Iraqi use of chemical or biological weapons, would be "swift, devastating, and overwhelming"?

These are mass destruction threats, this is deterrence in day-to-day and potentially deadly action. However slender the chances are that the threats will be carried out or the deterrence fail, even the faint possibility of such events means that governments should be utterly serious and honest in deciding the best course. This is not normal policy — with room for special interest, declarations of high principle, or pleasure in the discomfiture of rivals or friends. We are not, in other words, playing games.

When Boris Yeltsin says that the United States could start a third world war, what he means is naturally not that Russia would ever contemplate a nuclear strike against the US. That is yesterday's horror, not today's. What he means is that no one knows what a mass destruction exchange between Iraq and Israel, or Iraq and the US, or all three, might lead to. Since this is such dangerous ground, why is anybody treading on it?

The answer is that the risk is not truly new, but only appears in more dramatic form because there is a possibility that the US and Britain will attack Iraq. It is a risk which, in a general way, has been with us since Middle Eastern states, beginning with Israel, began acquiring these weapons years ago, but which became more serious when Saddam used Iraq's wealth to get his own horrific tools of war. The eight-year-long Iran-Iraq conflict was embryonically a war of mass destruction; the second Gulf war teetered on the edge. So the issue is not whether threatening Iraq with an attack increases this awful risk, but whether it increases it more or less than other policies.

In judging this hard question, it is important to avoid the black-and-white view that force is wholly bad and diplomacy wholly good. As Tony Blair and Robin Cook insist, the two are intermingled, and not only in the sense that the one backs up the other. First, it is important to grasp that American policy is aimed not so much at the announced aim of restoring the inspection regime as at pushing Saddam back into the isolation from which he had begun to emerge. It is aimed, in fact, at separating Saddam from his friends. The American squeeze is as much on Russia, France, China, and the big Arab states as on Iraq itself. That squeeze is not, as incorrectly perceived, to join in or endorse a military attack but to produce the acceptable compromise on inspection that they claim is possible. Already the effort to wrest such a compromise from Saddam is producing irritation, and more than irritation, in Moscow, Paris, and other capitals. The effect of the US threat, then, is to reintroduce Saddam's friends to his deeply untrustworthy nature. One Russian newspaper has complained that Saddam's intransigence threatened to destroy Russian foreign policy's last shreds of credibility.

All roads lead to such disillusion. If the efforts of the many envoys — Russian, French, and Arab — trying to come up with a formula to avoid conflict do produce one, and the US accepts it, the chances are very, very high that Saddam would soon renege on it, as he did with his "presidential sites" ploy over the last couple of months. Iraq's friends could hardly then return to their old line of urging a softening of both the inspection regime and of sanctions. If there is an attack, on the other hand, the likely outcome would have Saddam, in its aftermath, refusing to countenance any inspection regime at all. Equally, in that situation, it is hard to see Russia and France and the others taking up the cudgels again for Iraq. It would mean an extraordinary break with the US, a break that would go far beyond the matter of Iraq. So the diplomatic end, with or without the use of force, of "re-isolating" the Saddam regime is clear.

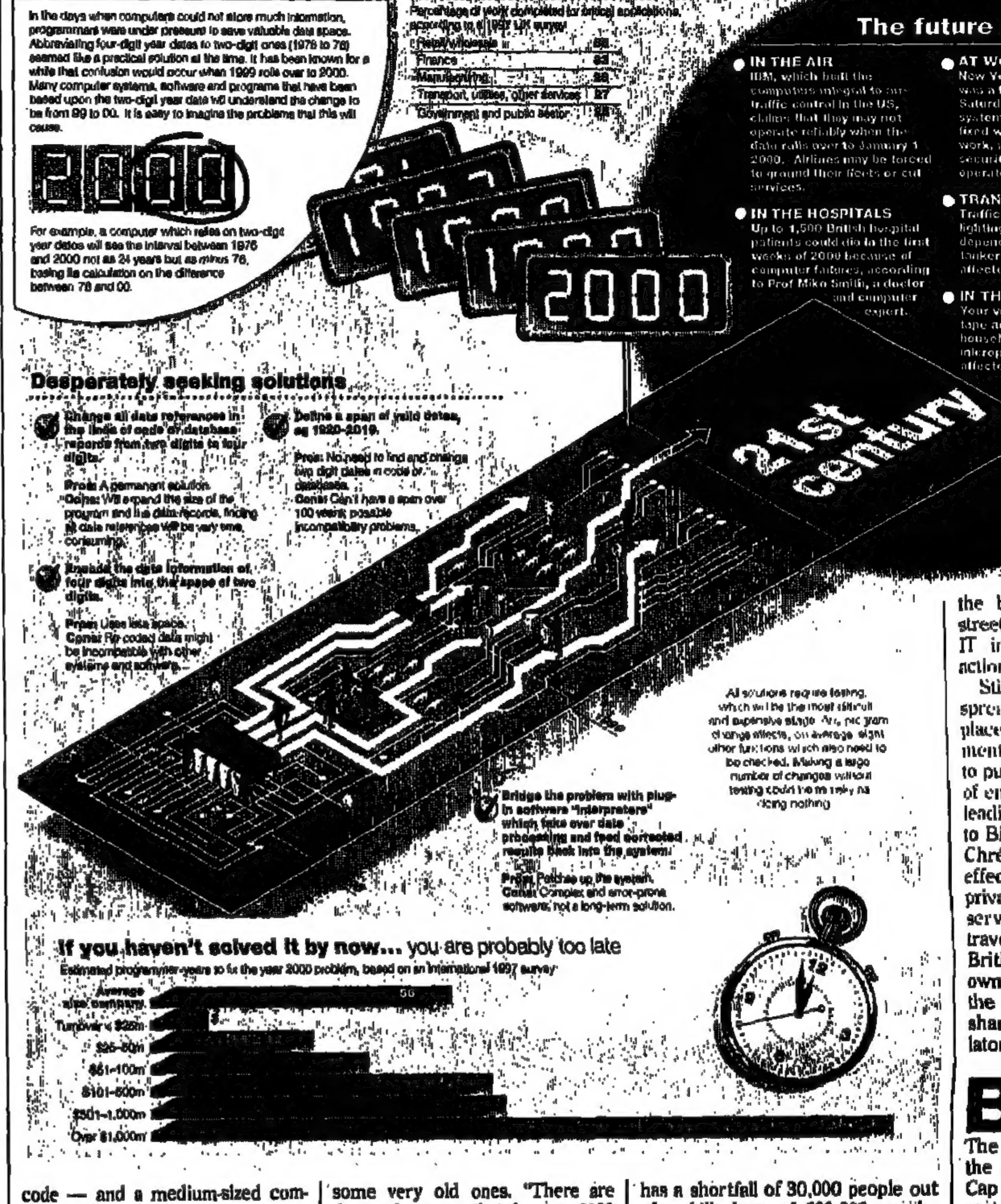
It is reasonable, all the same, to argue that a short aerial campaign will not solve the problem represented by Saddam's refusal to accept adequate inspection. Yet that very fact enters into the calculations. Saddam is a cautious man of paranoid character who understands the US as a capricious power, sometimes unexpectedly passive in the face of provocation, sometimes unexpectedly ready to go all the way. Saddam must know he risks the revival of a full-scale effort to remove him from power, even if the conflict remains conventional. If he used chemical or biological weapons, he would alter the nature of the struggle in many terrible ways, but one outcome would certainly be that he and his ruling élite would not physically survive.

WHATEVER happens, it is clear we are paying the price for much inattention, negligence, and lack of will since 1991. In all the talk about President Clinton being a man of mixed character but a good president, it is forgotten that, under him, American foreign policy has seriously faltered, not least in the Middle East. Where once there was a coherent plan and worthwhile objectives to which the governments of the Middle East, the US, Russia, and Europe could all to some extent subscribe, there came to be, instead, a muddle of ineffective policies. If Russia, France and China had grounds for their changed attitude to Iraq, it lies in this largely American failure.

Whichever risks we end up taking in the coming weeks, there has to be a new strategy for the Middle East, encompassing a tough-minded approach to Iraq's future, new moves on Iran, and real pressure on Israel's obstructionist government. It does not matter whether it is provided by President Clinton or President Gore, but, without it, the risks we are supposedly guarding against in the Middle East will not only not go away, they will grow worse.

A problem that has passed its sell-by date

It may be too late for companies hoping to avoid the double-zero disaster. **Chris Barrie, Simon Beavis** and **David Rowan** report



YOU know the story by now. Computer programmers from the 1960s to the early eighties see a simple way to save computer memory, and hence money: reduce any dates in the program to the last two digits. All goes smoothly — with 1975 painlessly becoming 75, 1983 becoming 83 — until one small event that ought really to have been foreseen. When the digital clock hits midnight on December 31, 1999, it confronts a year coded as 00. It assumes that this also begins with 19 — and acts accordingly. Supermarket computers reject cheese that appears a century past its sell-by date; oil-tanker engines shut down, deciding that they cannot arrive 100 years before they set out; pension-plan investors find their nest eggs reduced to 1900 values.

Apocalypse very soon — and one which political leaders still appear not to have fully grasped, according to the experts' regular warnings of doom. Last month it was the British-North American Committee of business leaders and academics, who wrote to governments in Britain, the United States and Canada about their "acute concern" that its leaders were not doing enough to ensure computers "comply" with the year 2000. A little earlier it was Robin Guenier, executive director of the government-appointed Taskforce 2000, warning the British prime minister that "we are getting it wrong. If we continue to do so, the harm to the economy will be substantial and the lives of millions of people will be unnecessarily damaged". A month earlier a consulting group warned of "severe disruption" as only around half of British companies were fully aware of the problem.

But there is a solution, as computer consultants and programmers are finding to their glee. At the right price, businesses can buy the expertise they need. Cap Gemini, Europe's largest computer services company, estimates the eventual bill in Britain will be some $37 billion — and that small organisations will need to pay $300,000 on average, medium-sized ones $650,000, and large ones $3 million.

British Telecom alone expects to spend $500 million, in a project that involves rewriting 300 million lines of code. Indeed, companies will be budgeting so much to solve the problem that there will simply not be the supply to meet their needs: System House, an industry newsletter published by Richard Holway, says it will be impossible for British companies to spend more than $25 billion — as further resources will not be available. Cap Gemini says demand for information technology (IT) staff to fix the problem will exceed supply after April this year.

The money does not go wholly to consultants: much of it is needed for raising awareness throughout organisations, establishing an in-house inventory of what needs attention, and eventually testing the new system. But the outside IT specialists and "change consultants" will command a high proportion. It can cost up to $2 to change a line of program code — and a medium-sized company might typically rely on 15 systems (from payroll to mailing lists) with perhaps 6,000 programs using 12 million lines of code. A complete year 2000 compliance project might take 50 programmers almost three years: that is why the experts are warning that even now action may be too late. For a medium-sized company such as this the cost would be about $25 million.

The IT industry has perhaps not helped itself by failing to define precisely the scale of the problem and the likely cost of solving it. The Gartner Group, the leading IT research firm in the US, estimates the global cost of clearing the bug at between $400 billion and $600 billion. But even then it has said the entire bill — when project-management costs, delayed upgrades, and litigation are added in — could be nearer $1 trillion. These are scary numbers — so huge that sceptics have used them to suggest that the computer industry is blowing the issue out of all proportion so it can make a fortune solving it.

Andy Kyte, Gartner Group's European research director, denies that the IT industry is exaggerating the problem in order to capitalise on it. He argues that the money spent merely "diverted spend" — with the sum that would have bought new computer systems being used to fix some very old ones. "There are those who argue that the year 2000 problem has been dreamt up by consultants to make a lot of money. I can say categorically that is not true. For the IT industry, this problem is practically the same as cleaning the drains. They are having to say, 'I'm sorry we can't do any of this new, sexy development work — we've got to go and clean the drains.'"

KYTE does not deny that there are some big winners. Some IT specialists producing specific computer tools to fix the bug will certainly find a new market. But apart from that, no one set of professionals will cash in above all others: "The major winners of the year 2000 are going to be the lawyers. It is inevitable that a lot of disputes are going to end up in the courts."

The unprecedented skills shortage is pushing up costs to extraordinary levels. Even within the last 12 months, firms have started to pay three to four times more for consultants and technicians who can solve the problem. Tales of poaching of skilled staff are rife; warnings have been coming in from leading firms that they will soon simply run out of trained people.

The Computer Services and Software Association (CSSA) says Britain has a shortfall of 30,000 people out of a skills base of 600,000 people. And the shortfall will get worse as demand increases.

That is why the UK Prison Service has begun exploratory talks with computer companies such as ICL about using prisoners to fill the gap. Prisoners already carry out database work and, at $3 an hour, could prove much cheaper than conventional programmers.

However, Gary Miles says there is evidence that some consultants are indulging in business practices that some clients would regard as criminal. There is anecdotal evidence that consultants are exploiting firms' mounting desperation and gazumping clients, trading one against the other in a ruthless auction for skills.

"People are cherry-picking," says Rob Wirszycz, director general of the CSSA. "It is understandable. In a dinner we held recently for chief executives of IT firms, they came to the conclusion that competition to hire people was greater than for business."

Prevailing wisdom has it that smaller companies are those most likely to suffer because of their inadequate reserves of manpower and finance. But Miles says this worry may be overdone. Small firms could not afford to buy the mainframes of the past: they bought PCs as the prices fell. Hence their technology tends to be newer and the companies less dependent on it. The most vulnerable companies are the bigger groups, such as high-street banks, entirely dependent on IT in handling millions of transactions.

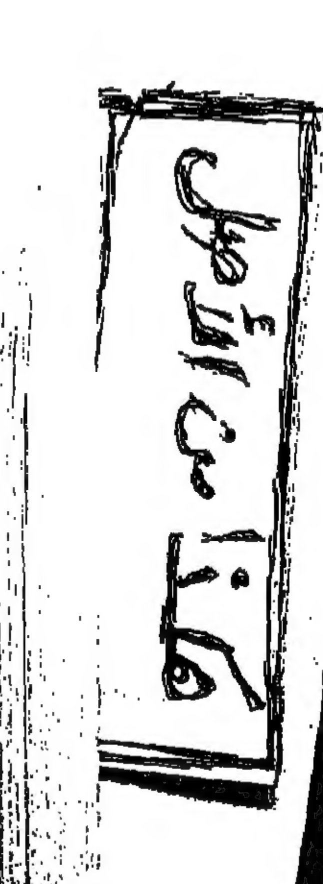
Still, awareness of the problem is spreading fast. Where there is complacency within national governments, big companies are beginning to put real pressure on for a change of emphasis. The recent letter from leading industrialists and academics to Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and Jean Chrétien warned of the catastrophic effects the bug could have on private-sector business, financial services, important public services, travel and defence. Last month the British government launched its own millennium bug agency under the chairmanship of Don Cruickshank, the outgoing telecoms regulator.

BUT observers still worry that complacency is still gripping all parts of the public sector. The Government is proving among the least prepared. Research for Cap Gemini shows that the public sector has completed only a quarter of the work needed to convert its computers, compared with 35 per cent for the retail and wholesale sectors. David Clark, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, estimates that the Government will need to spend $500 million to avoid the bug — and that does not include the health service or local government.

Already some computer systems are failing to deal with the date change. Credit cards with a 00 expiry date have already been refused by IKEA stores. Firms trying to process deliveries of goods after January 1, 2000 will also begin to find that old systems do not do the job. It is a problem which will strike progressively between now and the turn of the century.

Then there will be the problem that will strike on the first day of the new century in an estimated 60 to 80 billion microprocessors in every type of mechanical device from domestic appliances to lifts, trains and planes.

Andy Kyte laments the fact that the problem was originally labelled the "millennium timebomb". It is, he says, more like a hurricane. "We are currently feeling the first breezes. By next year the wind will be getting stronger and stronger until it reaches tornado force. By comparison, January 1, 2000 will come almost as a relief."



Ten billion dollar man goes on a silver-buying spree

WARREN Buffett — the $10 billion man who has become an investment legend — last week plunged into the speculators' graveyard of the silver market, buying a fifth of the world's supply, *writes Dan Atkinson*.

The 67-year-old "sage of Omaha" announced that he now controls nearly 130 million ounces, worth almost $1 billion at current prices.

News that Mr Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway investment trust had piled into a market already reeling from allegations of price-rigging propelled the price to a 10-year high and revived memories of the attempt in the late 1970s by Texan speculators Bunker and Herbert Hunt to corner the world's silver. Their $1.3 billion buying spree ended in disaster in 1980 and they had to be bailed out by the US government.

The new move sparked friction between the secretive London silver market and the more open New York Mercantile Exchange. Poland's KGHM company, Europe's largest silver producer, called on the London bullion market to publish figures for stockpiles of precious metals held in City vaults, to quell suspicions of market rigging.

The London Bullion Market Association meanwhile changed a key trading rule — that delivery must take place within five days — by extending the period to 15 days because the usual delivery methods are not up to handling the volume sparked by Mr Buffet's purchases. The market wants to avoid any of its members having to default as a result of late payment.

Mr Buffett began to buy last summer, when silver languished at about $4.50 an ounce. New film technologies — dispensing with the silver traditionally used — and sagging investment demand for gold had depressed the price.

Last week it had broken through $7 for the first time since 1988 as speculators around the world followed Mr Buffett's lead.

Johnson Matthey, one of the world's biggest silver refiners, said that it had doubled output at its UK refinery in the past few weeks to meet the new demand. It has been taking customers' scrap silver, unsuitable for the London bullion market, and refining it into ingots which can then be traded.

However, more cautious voices warned that silver speculation had proved catastrophic in the past.

Jewellery buyers are likely to balk at paying inflated prices for silver jewellery, especially when gold is so cheap, according to one analyst, and industrial users will find substitutes, should silver become too expensive.

Rhona O'Connell, analyst with broker T Hoare, said Mr Buffett had "spotted a window of opportunity and duly dived through it". But she warned that silver was unlikely to touch $8 an ounce and very unlikely to return to the near-$50 level reached in the heyday of the Hunt brothers.

Terminal struggle for wire power

Reuters is fighting for its commercial life in the face of fierce competition and accusations of industrial espionage, writes
Dan Atkinson



Screen stars . . . Reuters and Bloomberg in use at Merrill Lynch PHOTO: DAVID SILLITOE

SENIOR Reuters executives in London will this week come face to face with gimlet-eyed City analysts keen to hear what the venerable news and information company has to say regarding allegations of industrial espionage in the United States.

For years these same analysts have smiled on Reuters as a favourite counter on the Stock Exchange gaming table, a deep-blue plaque, a British name that leads its field worldwide. One recent investment circular on Reuters carried a headline that said it all: "Mad for it."

They are not amused by breathless newspaper reports of a grand jury investigation in New York. They do not expect to see the Reuters name appear in the same sentence as that of the US Attorney's Office or the FBI Computer Crimes Unit.

Their humour is unlikely to have been improved by Reuters' full-year figures, due this week, which are forecast to show pre-tax profits dropped during 1997, from $1.14 billion to about $1.12 billion. The alleged dirty tricks in the US have played no part in this earnings fall; rather, Reuters has been buffeted by the Asian meltdown and the strength of sterling.

As more and more deals are struck in electronic marketplaces, the prizes are glittering indeed. Every one of rival Bloomberg's screens brings in $1,100-$1,200 a month in rent, and the company has 100,000 such terminals around the world. Reuters has perhaps quarter of a million. But the price of failure, as Dow Jones Markets has discovered, is gruesome.

At the heart of the allegation about dirty tricks is the esoteric world of securities-analysis software, the workings inside the boxes of tricks that allow traders to collate data on shares and bonds at the push of a button. Bloomberg roared ahead in the early nineties and it is no secret that Reuters has been trying hard to catch up.

As part of that effort, Reuters acquired the company, now known as Reuters Analytics in Stamford, Connecticut, at the centre of the US Attorney's Office investigation. Initial allegations suggested Analytics improperly obtained or even stole "proprietary code" — copyrighted software — from Bloomberg, and that the code may have been used in its Reuters 3000 machine, the powerful new product considered critical to its growth prospects.

A former Bloomberg employee, it was suggested, had been used as middleman in the theft.

Last week Reuters calmed the rumours with a lengthy statement in which it acknowledged it had hired a consultancy to carry out analysis of the competition, but denied any suggestions of theft. It said the US authorities were examining whether Analytics had induced the consultancy to provide Bloomberg data to Reuters in breach of subscription agreements.

Furthermore the inquiry will investigate any possible incorporation of "reverse-engineered" Bloomberg software into Reuters products.

The crisis is already taking its toll in the City. NatWest Markets has downgraded Reuters shares from "add" to "hold", pending clarification. Some investors have moved already from "hold" to "sell" — $26 billion of market value was wiped off Reuters as the affair exploded, although that was trimmed back to about $1.6 billion by the company's reassurance last week that it faced, at worst, limited damage.

Persuasive talking will be required to convince the assembled investment gurus that Reuters is not losing its footing in an information market turning more ferociously competitive by the day.

The world of wire services used not to be like this. Chaps in graph-paper shirts sat at long desks, tore pieces of paper from teleprinters, scribbled a few amendments and passed the result over to transmission staff, who would duly tap it out on to "the tape".

ALL that changed in the seventies. Gyrating exchange rates and worldwide financial instability created a demand for accurate, minute-by-minute data and Reuters stepped into the breach, with its Monitor service, launched in 1973. Within a few years, Monitor had been superseded by a machine that actually allowed traders to do foreign-currency deals over the wire. The virtual marketplace was born.

But as Reuters was fitting its screens to every trading desk in the world and its currency-monitor radiopagers to the waistbands of every trader from San Francisco to Hong Kong, Salomons, the Wall Street bank, was bidding a not entirely regretful farewell to the outspoken Mike Bloomberg.

Mr Bloomberg became Bloomberg, and by the end of 1987 Bloomberg was in London, its core of people telling anyone who would listen that it intended to challenge Reuters. Few paid much attention.

But in the nineties, financial information just grew and grew. In 1996, the four biggest suppliers of the traders' magic boxes — Bloomberg, Reuters, Dow Jones Markets (formerly Telerate) and Bridge — took in $4.4 billion in sales.

By the mid-nineties banks and brokerages were striving to shrink the ton of ironmongery that weighed down every traders' desk.

Reuters itself forecast a fight to the finish in which only two big players would be able to dominate the global information industry. And — with Dow Jones Market costing its parent a fortune — there seems little doubt, at present, that they are likely to be the two protagonists in the Stamford affair, Reuters and Bloomberg.

It is, however, an ill wind . . . much of the cash pouring out of Reuters share is piling straight into Bloomberg. A source close to senior Bloomberg management said last week: "I think there's a lot of wry amusement." He said Bloomberg's top brass was taking the view that Reuters had been, at the very least, incredibly stupid.

But Mr Bloomberg, the idiosyncratic genius behind the company, will not be playing the affair down, said the source. And what is Bloomberg's endgame? The source was unequivocal: "Bloomberg's endgame is global domination."

In Brief

THE proposed $1.6 billion mega-merger between SmithKline Beecham and Glaxo Welcome could take a year to get the go-ahead from European and US regulators, and the two groups are likely to be forced to sell some of their directly competing brands.

RUPERT Murdoch's News Corporation is under examination by an international team of tax investigators as part of a Treasury drive to clamp down on multinational companies using international loopholes to avoid paying tax.

THE global alliance between British Airways and American Airlines is set for final approval from US and European regulators after the latest meeting between President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair. The deal would give the companies more than 60 per cent of traffic on the North American route.

MORE THAN $440 million was wiped off the value of British Biotechnology as the company revealed that the release of one of its drugs, Zacutex, has been delayed.

THE Bank of England spared homeowners and businesses a sixth post-election interest-rate rise when it pegged the cost of borrowing at 7.25 per cent against a backdrop of a slowing economy and continued uncertainty about the impact of the Asian financial crisis.

THE strength of the pound and poor prices for industrial chemicals cost ICI more than $350 million last year. The group revealed a 36 per cent fall in annual profits — from $983 million to $627 million.

MORE than $326 million will be wiped off the profits of British Airways this financial year because of the strength of sterling, the airline announced. The results could have been worse but for cost-cutting and a $64 million reduction in the cost of aviation fuel.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates February 9	Sterling rates February 2
Australia	2.4280-2.4331	2.3855-2.3[illegible]
Austria	20.83-20.85	20.87-20.9[illegible]
Belgium	61.11-61.21	61.40-61.5[illegible]
Canada	2.324-2.3447	2.3768-2.37[illegible]
Denmark	11.28-11.29	11.36-11.3[illegible]
France	9.92-9.93	9.986-9.9[illegible]
Germany	2.9611-2.9637	2.9809-2.98[illegible]
Hong Kong	12.63-12.64	10.48-10.5[illegible]
Ireland	1.1802-1.1822	1.1878-1.1[illegible]
Italy	2,925-2,928	2,941-2,9[illegible]
Japan	202.96-203.22	207.29-207.[illegible]
Netherlands	3.3383-3.3413	3.3585-3.3[illegible]
New Zealand	2.7949-2.800	2.7863-2.7[illegible]
Norway	12.34-12.35	12.33-12.3[illegible]
Portugal	303.12-303.47	304.92-305.[illegible]
Spain	250.94-251.26	252.66-252.[illegible]
Sweden	13.24-13.26	13.30-13.3[illegible]
Switzerland	2.3875-2.3908	2.4147-2.41[illegible]
USA	1.6328-1.6338	1.6380-1.6[illegible]
ECU	1.5023-1.5041	1.5113-1.5[illegible]

FTSE100 Share Index up 1.8 at 5600.8, FTSE 250 Index up 59.9 at 4875.8. Gold down $1.65 at $[illegible]

Dodik turns on his own Serb nationalists

Christian Lecomte
In Banja Luka

IN NOVEMBER last year, a portrait of Radovan Karadzic, the former leader of the ultra-nationalist Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) and an indicted war criminal, adorned the office of Dord Mikic, the local president of the SDS. The painting has now been taken down and sits facing the wall.

Like his boss, Mikic has decided to keep a low profile. Isolated, he has been observing the constant toing and froing at Banja Luka's former arts centre, which Biljana Plavsic, president of the Bosnian Serb Republic, has occupied for the past few months.

Her new prime minister, Milorad Dodik, has now joined her there with his government. Mikic knows he will soon have to leave his office and look for other premises.

So is the SDS being pushed out? "A process of destruction has begun, and naturally it will continue," Dodik told Le Monde. Elected prime minister on January 18 by the parliament of the Serb entity in the absence of members of the SDS and its far-right ally, the Serbian Radical Party, Dodik has begun a race against time.

"We have to act fast and get the country out of this mess," he says. "If the population is given an acceptable standard of living, it will turn away from Karadzic. We have to fight corruption, redistribute money, pay people's wages and create jobs."

Dodik ordered 45 bank accounts to be closed in Pale, the ultra-nationalists' stronghold, and sidelined those entrepreneurs who had remained loyal to Karadzic. His interior ministry took control of all police forces. On January 30, he got the government transferred from Pale to Banja Luka. "Pale is becoming a little more isolated every day," he says.

Dodik, a 38-year-old businessman and former reformer who throughout the war supported every peace initiative and kept in contact with leading Bosnian Muslims and Croats, is a pragmatist.

"The Dayton accords need to be applied to the letter," he explains. "Refugees must return home, and the joint institutions of the Serb Republic and the Croat-Muslim Federation [the two entities making up Bosnia-Herzegovina] must start functioning.

Milorad Dodik, right, is sworn in as the Bosnian Serb Republic's new prime minister PHOTO: DRAGO VEJNOVIC

"The country needs to be given a common currency, a single flag, a single passport and independent media. But above all Dayton has given the Serb Republic the chance to benefit from the financial backing of the international community."

On January 26 the World Bank lent it $17 million as part of a reconstruction aid programme. That same day, the European Union granted aid of $6.5 million.

This money will, among other things, make it possible to pay compensation to teachers on strike since October because their salaries had not been paid. The teachers immediately called off their action.

The United States Agency for International Development (Usaid) has opened an office in Banja Luka. Money is pouring in, and there are many reconstruction programmes.

"Banja Luka is looking increasingly like a mini Sarajevo," says a French aid worker. "The Americans are moving in. They're everywhere and full of ideas. People round here say that if a street is flooded because of faulty pipes there's no need to worry because Usaid will build a bridge within an hour."

The international community, which played the Plavsic card to counter the Pale ultra-nationalists' policy of trying to obstruct the application of Dayton, has now put all its money on Dodik in a bid to neutralise them.

The International Crisis Group (ICG), a team of foreign observers highly reputed for its in-depth political reports, has nothing but praise for the new prime minister. It has described his appointment as the most significant political development here since Dayton.

While the ICG has its doubts about Plavsic, long a close ally of Karadzic, it praises Dodik's integrity and has urged the international community to give carte blanche to a man who managed, despite nationalist pressure, to bring prosperity to the town of which he was mayor.

Many Bosnian democrats see Dodik as the man who could be the first to break down the barriers of nationalism. "Muslim, Serb and Croat nationalists feed on each other," says Miodrag Zivanovic, a Social Liberal. "If one group gives, the others will fall. That is why Dodik's appointment to such a high office strikes me as crucial."

People in Sarajevo realise there are lessons to be learnt from what is going on in the Serb Republic. With a general election in September, its two Social Democratic parties have just started talks to look at the possibility of merging. "If Dodik's policy is successful in the Serb Republic, the electorate may be prompted to vote for non-nationalists for the first time since the war," Zivanovic says.

Although he is a man in a hurry, Dodik knows how to take his time with controversial issues. He has not, for example, ordered his police to arrest alleged Serb war criminals. And he hopes that the town of Brcko, which Serbs and Muslims are still fighting to control, will remain in the Serb Republic. "The survival of our entity hinges on that, because it is a region that links the east and west of the republic."

Dodik's power base is still not secure enough to enable him to make unpopular decisions. He knows the SDS is waiting in the wings. Should he put a foot wrong, Karadzic's portrait could be rehung.

(February 4)

Nickel deal spurs New Caledonia talks

Claudine Wéry in Nouméa

"ITS as though a great weight had been taken off my mind," said Victor Tutugoro, spokesman for the executive of New Caledonia's separatist movement, the Socialist Kanak National Liberation Front (FLNKS), when a draft agreement between two nickel-mining companies, Eramet and SMSP, was signed in the New Caledonian capital, Nouméa, on February 2. The agreement was, he said, "a victory for the FLNKS".

Under the agreement, the two companies will exchange nickel deposits, and a nickel reprocessing factory will be built in the north of the island. This will allow talks on New Caledonia's political future, which had been stalled for two years, to restart.

Bernard Lepeu, president of the Union Calédonienne, the party with the most radical line on the nickel issue, said "an important and indispensable step had been accomplished as regards the factory in the north".

There is also a sense of relief among New Caledonians as a whole, who were concerned last week that road-blocks set up by FLNKS activists might spark fresh clashes between loyalists and separatists.

The agreement between Eramet and SMSP marks the end of wrangling that lasted for two years, a period during which the separatist movement became deeply split while at the same time mustering fresh grassroots support.

Since April 1996, the FLNKS had insisted that access to mining deposits in the north should be a precondition for a resumption of talks on New Caledonia's future status, which is due to be put to a referendum later this year.

The so-called "mining precondition" caused deep divergences between the various parties making up the FLNKS, particularly between the Palika, which asked for the precondition to be waived in February 1997, and the Union Calédonienne, which always wanted to keep it.

The loyalist Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République (RPCR), which is headed by the neo-Gaullist deputy Jacques Lafleur, started political talks last December with the Comité de Coordination des Indépendantistes, a group made up of FLNKS dissidents and two small separatist parties. But several members of the committee have already begun to backtrack.

Now that the mining issue has been resolved, the FLNKS is expected to enter into official talks on the future of New Caledonia, as it was invited to do by the French prime minister's office on February 1. Tutugoro said: "It's fair to say that the precondition has now been waived."

The decision will probably be formalised at the FLNKS conference on February 14 and 15, which will also provide an opportunity for the separatists to mend their differences.

(February 3)

Fresh ideas on nuclear policy

EDITORIAL

THIS time, the Jospin method has worked: the French prime minister has managed to push through major policy decisions on nuclear energy without too many cracks opening up in his government.

After the general policy speech he gave in June 1997 shortly after coming to office, Lionel Jospin did a lot of listening and precious little deciding. There ensued a fierce debate on nuclear energy within his "plural" parliamentary majority, with the Greens on one side and the Socialists and Communists on the other.

The Greens pressed for a reorientation of France's nuclear policy, which they said should be symbolised by the immediate closure of the Superphénix fast-breeder reactor at Creys-Malville in the upper Rhône valley. The Socialists and Communists believed that the nuclear energy sector should continue to operate as in the past, with further research conducted into the incineration of nuclear waste.

Each side can pride itself on emerging from the debate without loss of face, since neither gave any ground on essential points. Jospin confirmed that France's present energy policy, which relies mainly on nuclear power, would be maintained.

But he also provided opponents of that policy with cause for satisfaction when he advocated a diversification of energy sources and genuine transparency in the nuclear industry. In this he was following public opinion: two-thirds of the population believe that nuclear power stations should continue to operate. On the issue of storing waste, however, there is great mistrust: 82 per cent have misgivings about the way nuclear waste is handled.

Jospin will still have to quell the fears of those about to lose their jobs at Superphénix. There are doubts that the 100 million francs ($16.25 million) he has earmarked for their redeployment will be enough.

There can be no doubt that France's energy policy has taken a radical turn. The government's determination to explore diversification is reflected in its plans for a tax on energy consumption that will be partly used to develop the renewable energy sector. This new approach suggests that there will be a choice of several options when the time comes for France's existing nuclear power stations to be phased out from 2010.

But the most important shift in policy is the government's announcement that it is to introduce a bill on transparency in the nuclear industry and on its regulation. Jospin has provided the French with guarantees of security and transparency. He hopes, in return, that they will continue to accept nuclear energy as a provider of electricity.

(February 4)

Moves to redraw the past alarm historians

Christophe Sabourst

REVISIONISM is alive and well and living in Japan. It is openly espoused by such well-known figures as Yoshinori Kobayashi and Fujioka Nobukatsu.

Kobayashi is an author of manga cartoons, in which he regularly denounces historians who focus on crimes committed by the Japanese army during the second world war. His cartoons appear twice a month in the magazine Sapio, which is published by Shôgakukan, one of the largest publishing houses in Japan.

Nobukatsu is a professor of educational science at Tokyo University. He is opposed to what he calls the "suicidogenic vision of history", which he says is propounded by Japanese historians.

He proposes as a remedy that all passages in school textbooks which undermine "the national self-respect of the Japanese" should be cut, and that they should be rewritten according to a "more liberal approach to history" that would "make the Japanese trust their values".

In the seventies, efforts were made to deny the Nanjing massacre of 1937, when Japanese troops slaughtered 200,000 Chinese men, women and children; today the compulsory prostitution of 80,000-200,000 "comfort women", most of them Korean, during the second world war is also denied by some.

Historians are divided over how to respond to the current wave of revisionism. Most of them refuse even to get involved in the debate, convinced as they are that they would be wasting their time as well as giving the revisionists free publicity.

They feel it is more important for them to continue with their own work, arguing that, just as the many scenes of violence to be found in mangas have not made the Japanese violent, so revisionist books and strip cartoons will not turn their readers into revisionists.

According to an opinion poll carried out by the television channel, NHK, in 1994, almost 80 per cent of those interviewed admitted that Japan had been the aggressor in wars in which it had been involved, from the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95 to the war in the Pacific of 1941-45.

There are, however, other historians, particularly those specialising in modern history, who feel it is their duty to respond to revisionist arguments. In their view, there can be no compromise with a historical approach that not only disputes their own work but paves the way for further regressive behaviour. They point to the "premeditated slips" about the past made by Japanese politicians over the past 20 years.

Above all, these historians argue that if the textbooks used in secondary education — which are still subject to screening by the education ministry — now mention the case of the "comfort women", it is as a result of their own constant struggle against all forms of revisionism.

To understand revisionism, one has to remember that in Japan history is a discipline torn between two requirements — the need to satisfy a demand for the present to be legitimised by the past, and the need to make the Japanese better acquainted with the past.

Revisionism forms an integral part of those contrary forces. It aims not to satisfy demand for explicitly revisionist history, but to appeal to a public which, according to readership surveys, likes either fictionalised history that focuses on such simplistic notions such as "the man, his psychology and his time", or investigative history where the historian plays the role of detective.

That there is increased interest in the kind of fictionalised or investigative history that encourages revisionism would seem to be corro borated by the increasing number of Japanese historians who have gone over to writing biographies.

The same people who earlier turned their noses up at the genre are now turning out historical overviews along the lines of "Japan, from its origins to the present day".

History became a veritable industry in Japan after the war. The publication of history books, including revisionist ones, now plays a key role in guaranteeing the profits of many publishing houses.

(January 31)



A drawing from Yoshinori Kobayashi's latest album. The character, Kobayashi's alter ego, rants against politicians: 'Stop thinking you're right! The apologies you give to Asian countries only serve yourselves! You're just cowards! And I won't allow you to apologise in my name!'

Cartoonist who challenges Japan's status quo

Michaël Prazan and Tristan Mendès France

YOSHINORI Kobayashi is a *manga-ka*, in other words a creator of Japanese strip cartoons. He uses a style not very different from that of his fellow cartoonists: his characters have big eyes and adopt emphatic poses as in such celebrated mangas as Candy or Dragon Ball Z.

Yet Kobayashi is something of an exception in the vast manga industry, which caters to all sections of Japanese society, from senior executives to teenage girls. His cartoons are a pretext that enables him to deliver a political message. Twice a month, Kobayashi fills several pages of Sapio, a news magazine of reactionary hue that is particularly popular with the young.

Kobayashi first made a name for himself some 15 years ago, but really hit the headlines in 1994: he was one of the first people to blame the authorities for a contaminated blood scandal. He went on to reveal the involvement of the Aum Shinrikyo cult and its guru, Shoko Asahara, in the 1995 nerve-gas attack in the Tokyo underground.

Two years ago, Kobayashi joined the ranks of "historical liberalism", a revisionist movement headed by Nobukatsu Fujioka, who enjoys discreet support from one wing of the Liberal Democratic Party.

Kobayashi, once described as "the best-dressed man in Japan", and still youthful even though he is pushing 40, is a familiar figure. The character he portrays in his mangas is his alter ego, a convulsively drawn little fellow who adopts, in turn, a moralising, accusing or puzzled attitude.

In his most recent cartoons, Kobayashi gives his own version of the past while at the same time discrediting his adversaries, who, he claims, are driven by a destructive and anti-Japanese form of masochism.

The bubbles in his drawings are a vehicle for lengthy and impassioned arguments insidiously aimed at a new generation of Japanese for whom history is an uncharted area. Revisionist mangas may provide an outlet for their frustrations.

In his latest manga album, Manifesto for the New Pride-ism (a neologism coined as a sarcastic reference to the Communist Party Manifesto), Kobayashi tries to expose the pitfalls and contradictions of official history.

First published in Sapio, then brought out in a complete version in May 1997, his manga examines the whole "comfort women" affair and the events surrounding it. He describes how, after a long period of indifference, he began to have doubts about the dominant thinking on such issues, which, he says, tended deliberately to exaggerate Japan's responsibilities. In the end, after weighing up the pros and cons of the arguments, he said he was won over by people better qualified than he to talk about such matters.

The manga contains sentences such as: "In the disorder of war, the imperial army built houses to protect women from the violence that reigned when Japan entered China." And Kobayashi argues that if those Chinese and Korean women ended up turning to prostitution it had nothing to do with Japan: "It was not the Japanese who rounded up the 'comfort women', but Chinese collaborators. It was they who exploited them for their own profit."

He says nothing of the 3,000 or so, mostly Chinese victims of Unit 731, a germ-warfare unit operated by the Japanese in Harbin, in northeastern China, between 1936 and 1945. Nor does he mention the Nanjing massacre of 1937.

Kobayashi rejects accusations of racism. He concludes his manga by announcing that he has joined the Association for the Revision of School Textbooks.

That resulted in his being thrown out of SPA, another magazine that used to publish him. Last November, the Kobayashi lobby managed to get 176 photographs of the Nanjing massacre removed from the Nagasaki memorial on the grounds that they came from American propaganda films.

(January 31)

Mattila holds Paris in awe

LIEDER RECITAL
Pierre Gervasoni

KARITA MATTILA is to singing what Esa-Pekka Salonen is to conducting — a living example of the great renaissance that has taken place in Finnish musical life over the past 20 years.

The young soprano's spectacular success also marks a historic turning point in the tradition of Finnish singing. For although Aino Ackté was acclaimed in Paris at the turn of the century, and Aulikki Rautawaara at Glyndebourne a little later, it was above all the basses Martti Talvela and Matti Salminen and the baritones Kim Borg and Tom Krause who put Finland on the international singing map.

Mattila's triumphs at the Paris opera houses have earned her a large and fervent following. Her fans naturally made a beeline for the recital she gave at the Auditorium du Louvre on January 28.

In her recordings, Mattila has seemed, up to now, less at ease in Lieder singing than in opera. On her showing at the Louvre, this is an area where she has now also blossomed. At no point in her intelligently chosen programme did she lack vocal resources or stylistic distinction (except for some slightly muffed high notes in a Brahms song — which she gave as an encore).

Won over from the start by the opening Beethoven Lied ("Ich liebe dich . . ."), which Mattila sang dressed like some Nordic priestess complete with transparent veils and tight-fitting bracelets, the audience clearly felt a total rapport with the multi-faceted singer.

But two Beethoven Lieder inspired by Goethe (Wonne der Wehmut and Neue Liebe, neues Leben) quickly showed that Mattila was not going to restrict her appeal to pure sensual charm. Her free singing line, her breath control and the chiaroscuro of her timbre, rich in harmonics in the low-to-medium register, enabled her to shape the songs convincingly.

Her accompanist, Ilmo Ranta, avoided the twin pitfalls of slavishly emphasising the slightest inflection of the voice, or jealously hogging the limelight. He simply set out to paint a discreet and shimmering backdrop to Mattila's rendering of such flowing songs as Luulit mäks selin sua and Hyvää yötä, by Sibelius's only pupil, Leevi Madetoja.

She gave a memorably distracted performance of Richard Strauss's Three Ophelia Lieder, coming across successively as distraught, monomaniacal and childlike. At the end of them, one could feel the audience holding its breath before bursting into torrents of applause.

Mattila's qualities as a singer and the conviviality of her presence mark her out as a worthy successor to the late lamented Talvela (1935-89).

(February 1-2)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

U.S. to Come Clean on Ski Lift Disaster

William Drozdiak in Munich

THE United States Defense Secretary William S. Cohen sought to defuse a serious rift with Italy at the weekend by promising that the United States would share all classified information about an accident that killed 20 people when a low-flying U.S. military plane sheared the cables holding up a ski lift.

Speaking to reporters after talks with Italian Defense Minister Beniamino Andreatta here, Cohen said the United States is committed to a "complete and open investigation" into the disaster, which occurred last week near the northern Italian ski resort of Cavalese. He said two flight recorders that charted key data from the EA-6B surveillance craft that clipped the cable had been released to Italian investigators and that a joint commission would peruse all "consistent evidence."

The accident triggered outrage across Italy because of repeated complaints in the past about low-level training missions in the Dolomite mountains. U.S. and Italian military planes have used the area recently to practice surveillance and radar-jamming runs for Bosnia peacekeeping operations.

Italian resentment was compounded when the American flight crew refused to answer questions about the accident when interrogated by Italian prosecutors on the day after the accident. Italian officials also were enraged when a senior Marine commander contested their version of events and U.S. military authorities waited three days to hand over crucial data from the flight recorders.

Marine Corps commanders have acknowledged that the pilot, Marine Capt. Richard J. Ashby, and his three-man crew were flying far below the approved altitude during their training mission. Ashby was quoted in the Italian press as telling his attorney that his altimeter may have malfunctioned. He said he was surprised when the cable suddenly loomed ahead of him and did everything to avoid it.

An assistant of the Polish consul lights a candle at the scene, where two Poles were among the 20 dead

Andreatta criticized the commander of the U.S. air base in Aviano, Italy, where the surveillance plane is based, for failing to cooperate with Italian authorities. But he said he was comforted by comments from Cohen and President Clinton, who told Italy's Prime Minister Romano Prodi he was "heartsick" over the disaster and would cooperate with the inquiry.

"Public opinion in Italy requires a process which allows us to define the causes of the crash and to have no obstacles to find the truth," Andreatta said. He insisted that everything must be done to avoid a similar tragedy, even if it means imposing permanent restrictions on low-level flying missions.

Cohen said he agreed there would have to be a thorough review of the rules governing low-altitude military flights over Italy's crowded air space. But he stressed that some low-level training flights must continue to prepare U.S. crews to carry out their Bosnia peacekeeping missions effectively.

Italy has demanded that the airmen be held accountable under its own laws, and prosecutors have brandished the prospect of multiple manslaughter charges. But U.S. officials said a "status of forces" agreement with Italy makes clear that any prosecution for air space violations will be conducted in the country that owns the aircraft.

U.S. officials also sought to defuse Italian suspicions that the delay in handing over the flight recorders was an attempt to hide embarrassing information. They said the confusion was due to the fact the crew made an emergency landing because the plane was damaged.

Fearing an explosion, crew members fled the plane. Personnel who rushed to secure the ejection seats removed the two recorders, which contain flight data but no voice transmissions. They handed the recorders to a security officer, who locked them in a safe until they were given to Italian investigators.

While pleased that the Italians now seem satisfied with the release of classified data, U.S. officials said the recorders may not explain why the plane was flying so far below its approved course, nor whether it was due to mechanical failure or pilot disorientation.

● Two U.S. Marine Corps fighter jets collided off Kuwait and crashed into the waters of the Persian Gulf last week, killing one of the two pilots involved, military officials said.

Review the Cuba Food Embargo

EDITORIAL

BENDING to winds strengthened by Pope John Paul II's visit, leading American supporters of a particular line on Cuba have changed course. From denying food and medicine to the Cuban people in order to drive them to revolt against their Communist rulers, Senator Jesse Helms and the Cuban American National Foundation now propose that private American citizens and even the U.S. government donate these items to needy Cubans.

The politicians and exile groups who endorse this change deserve credit. Implicitly, they are admitting that an embargo bearing directly on the health and welfare of innocent Cubans is a cruel practice that subverts American ideals and retards change.

The new proposal contains conditions that sponsors realized might provoke Fidel Castro to turn it down, as he now has. Sponsors take such a repudiation as a political victory in that it ostensibly puts the onus on the Castro regime. The conditions, leaving intact the U.S. embargo, are meant to ensure that in the sponsorship, distribution and enjoyment of these donations the benefits accrue entirely to the Cuban people, not to the Castro regime.

This is a good purpose, but it should not be allowed to get in the way of meeting the people's needs. If this is to be done, food and medicine shipments will have to be made through normal commercial channels as well as special humanitarian ones. That will require lifting some of the embargo's restrictions — a step opposed by the Miami groups and their supporters. But it is a necessary and worthy step. The deliberate infliction of pain on people Americans supposedly wish to help is an unsustainable policy.

President Clinton demands Cuban "reciprocity" for any American policy softening. But Fidel Castro has gone ahead with a major concession in allowing the Pope to come to Cuba and to start renewing the spirit and organization of his church. The ball is in the American court. What better response than to start reviewing the embargo? It was imposed nearly four decades ago, when Cuba was a pawn of an American global adversary. Now the embargo is an anomaly that isolates the United States and lets Fidel Castro play the aggrieved nationalist.

Its American supporters cling to the embargo as the essential lever to bring change. But the Pope would jettison the whole thing; he regards the embargo as a "monstrous crime." Who do you think qualifies as a better guide to the challenging of Communist power structures — Francisco Hernandez of the Cuban Foundation, Jesse Helms, Bill Clinton or John Paul?

Don't Cuddle Up to China, Warns Wei

OPINION
Jim Hoagland

TYRANTS jail and exile rebellious, free spirits like Wei Jingsheng for speaking truth to and about them. As the Soviets feared Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Chinese Communists fear Wei's intuitive understanding of their corrupt and inhumane system. The Chinese kept this former electrician and pamphleteer in prison for most of the past two decades to silence him.

That silence is now broken. Wei's enforced exile in the United States provides him a vast platform. The secret diplomacy that led to his release and expulsion in November have not tempered his truth-telling. Gulping in the oxygen of freedom here, Wei has begun to author opinion pieces and deliver speeches that strongly challenge the view that China, with American engagement, is slowly evolving into a stable free-market democracy and U.S. ally.

China's expulsion of Wei may someday be seen as one of those seemingly smart moves that turn a problem into a disaster. It may rank with the Shah of Iran's decision to force Ayatollah Khomeini into exile in Paris, where Khomeini used modern communications to stir rebellion in Tehran.

Wei clearly was not part of the deal Beijing thought it had with the Clinton administration to keep him on a tight leash. At a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations last week, Wei denounced Washington's embrace of Beijing as "selling out their friends and interests" in China and helping a regime he labeled "the enemy of the United States."

The stark language clanged as extreme on some ears of the academics, politicians, labor leaders and others present. As he spoke, the calculated risk Beijing's rulers decided to run became clearer: Away from Chinese soil, he may be unable to sustain the acuity, indignation and knowledge that have illuminated his denunciations of a rotten system.

This is where the Solzhenitsyn analogy runs deep. Encountering Wei's version of U.S.-Chinese relations is reminiscent of the shock of reading a Spanish newspaper in 1975 reporting the Russian writer's unreserved admiration and approval of the Franco and Pinochet regimes. How can a genuine hero and rebel so acute about his own country be so misguided on others?

After asserting that the United States "unwisely ceded all the Eastern European countries to Stalin," Wei argued that the United States helped Mao Tse-tung's Communists take power in Beijing.

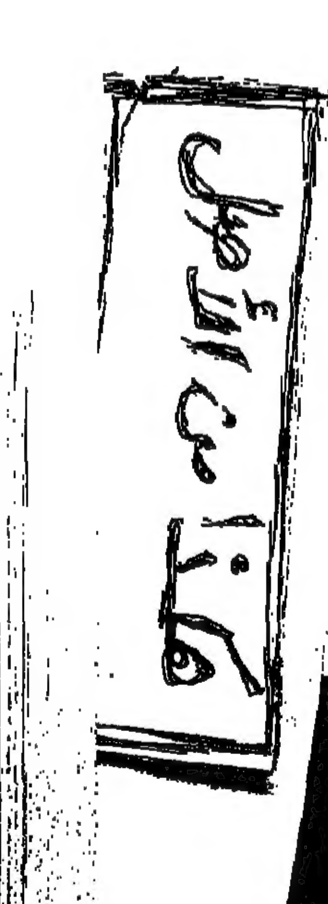
That version of history is not familiar to most Americans, and afterwards some seized on it to discount the rest of Wei's fiery, unyielding message. A counterattack to Wei's denunciations is forming among Beijing's friends here.

But it should come as no surprise that a man who has just spent 18 years in prison does not have a sophisticated grasp of international relations. Nor should Wei's views of American policies, however flawed or one-dimensional, detract from his penetrating analysis of the Communist leadership in China.

Instead, Americans should be alarmed at the prospect that Wei's views represent a broad feeling among Chinese democrats about U.S. reliability and intentions. His general warning is that the United States is building up a future crisis with China by supporting a discredited regime. His specific warning is that America must not back away from criticizing China on human rights, to buy the freedom of dissidents or anything else.

Aware that the Clinton administration has not yet decided if it will present this year the usual resolution of criticism of China at the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Wei warned: "This is an important symbol of support for human rights in China." Dropping it would be disastrous for democratic forces there, he suggested, and for America's position with those who will follow the Communists in power.

Wei Jingsheng is an inconvenient man for governments. Exile in America has not lessened his ability, and determination, to speak unsettling thoughts to power. Beijing's wager that he will do them less damage abroad may turn out to be a historic miscalculation.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 15 1998

Texans Divided by Woman's Execution

Sue Anne Pressley
in Huntsville, Texas

KARLA Faye Tucker, the "Pickaxe Killer" turned born-again Christian, died of a lethal injection on Tuesday night last week, closing a long fight for her life as a crowd outside the Texas death house prayed for her soul.

Tucker, 38, was pronounced dead at 6.45 pm Central Standard Time, becoming the first woman executed in Texas since the Civil War and only the second in the United States since the resumption of the death penalty in 1976. Although she and her attorneys had played down her gender in their many pleas for clemency, the fact that she was a woman helped arouse international interest in her cause and generate appeals for mercy from figures including Pope John Paul II and religious broadcaster Pat Robertson.

Wearing a white prison uniform and white tennis shoes, Tucker lay strapped on her back on a gurney as she delivered her final statements to the gathered witnesses, who included her husband, Dana Brown, a prison ministry worker she married by proxy in 1995, and Ronald Carlson, a Houston machinist and brother of one of the victims.

"I love all of you very much," she said to the witnesses. "I am going to be face to face with Jesus now."

Addressing her husband, she said, "Baby, I love you."

Then a lethal dose of sodium thiopental began dripping into the veins of each arm, along with pancuronium bromide, which is a muscle relaxant, and potassium chloride, which stops the heartbeat, and her eyes quickly closed. Within a few minutes, she was dead. Officials with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice said that Tucker also could have requested a sedative, but did not.

"I never saw Karla Faye Tucker take the smile off her face," said Vicente Arenas, a Houston television reporter who was among the witnesses.

The scene was emotional outside the Department of Criminal Justice — here called the death house — in



Supporters of capital punishment outside the prison in Huntsville before Karla Faye Tucker's execution

this east Texas town of 35,000 about 60 miles north of Houston, where a record 37 men were executed last year. Several hundred people on both sides of the issue crowded against police lines, some still arguing over the value of the death penalty, others praying and singing "Amazing Grace" and other hymns.

"Bye bye, Karla Faye," read one sign. "Forget Injection, Use a Pickax," read another.

But many others here were sympathetic to Tucker's plight: "I'm Ashamed to be a Texan," one sign read, and another: "Jesus Loves Karla Faye and So Do I".

Cheers went up from the crowd when her death was announced.

The case had divided victims' families. Carlson, brother of Deborah Thornton, one of the two people Tucker was convicted of helping to kill, participated in rallies at the state Capitol in Austin asking that Tucker be spared. Richard Thornton, the victim's husband, argued that he was sick of the depiction of Tucker as "Miss Saint."

Arenas said Thornton, who is in a wheelchair with severe diabetes and was a witness to the execution, muttered throughout the proceedings. "The world's a better place," he was heard to say during the execution.

It had become increasingly clear on Monday last week that despite Tucker's efforts to show she was a changed person, notably in televised appearances on "60 Minutes," Robertson's "The 700 Club," and CNN, her quest to spare her life had failed. The state Board of Pardons and Paroles, which could have commuted her sentence to life in prison, voted 16-0, with two members abstaining, to deny her request. Tucker, who could have been eligible for parole in 2003 had the board agreed, had asked that she be given life in prison without the possibility of release, but there is no such sentence in Texas, and board members said they could not make a special case of Tucker.

After the board's ruling, Tucker's only hope lay with the U.S. Supreme Court, which turned down two appeals without comment on the afternoon of her execution, and Gov. George W. Bush, who, under the law, could only grant her one 30-day stay. But here in Texas, the national leader in executions with one out of every three that occurs in the United States, governors traditionally have seldom intervened in death-penalty cases and Bush was no exception.

"May God bless Karla Faye Tucker and may God bless her victims and their families," Bush said after declining to grant the stay.

No one disputed the fact that Tucker committed a nightmarish act. According to her own account she began using heroin at the age of 10 and was a drug-addled prostitute when she and a friend, Daniel Garrett, entered the Houston apartment of Jerry Lynn Dean on June 13 1983 to steal a motorcycle.

Garrett began beating Dean with a hammer, and Tucker, who said she was disturbed by the "gurgling" sounds the wounded man made, found a 3-foot-long pickaxe and began hacking at his body. Then she noticed a figure cowering under a pile of blankets and swung the pickaxe again, striking Deborah Thornton on the shoulder. She said that Garrett finished Thornton off; the pickaxe was found embedded in the woman's chest.

Tucker, who testified against Garrett, was not tried for Thornton's murder, but received the death penalty for the slaying of Dean. Garrett, who was also sentenced to death, died of a liver ailment in prison in 1993.

Tucker: International pleas for mercy were ignored

Tucker said that as she waited in jail for her trial, her head began to clear from the years of drugs, and meeting with jail-ministry workers she found religion and the peace that sustained her for more than 14 years on death row.

In her final days, an unusual assortment of people rallied to her cause, including the Pope and the Rev. Robertson, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network, who normally supports the death penalty.

After the execution, Tucker's body was taken to the Huntsville Funeral Home where her husband was expected to claim it for burial.

Clinton Vows to 'Never' Resign

Peter Baker and Susan Schmidt

PRESIDENT Clinton firmly declared on Friday last week that he would "never" resign in the face of allegations that he tried to cover up an extramarital affair with a young aide, even as his lawyer launched an aggressive counterattack on prosecutors by seeking court sanctions to punish "a deluge of illegal leaks."

During a news conference with visiting British Prime Minister Tony Blair dominated by questions about his alleged relationship with Monica S. Lewinsky, Clinton said he did nothing wrong by calling in his personal secretary to review his contacts with Lewinsky a day after he was asked about them in a January 17 deposition he gave in the Paula Jones case. But he repeatedly refused to provide any explanation of his actions, saying he would not discuss any specifics while authorities are investigating.

The extraordinary scene of a president grilled about his sex life in the majestic setting of the East Room came on a day when long-simmering tensions between the White House and independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr escalated into open political and legal warfare.

Clinton charged that "someone else is leaking unlawfully out of the grand jury proceeding" and dispatched his attorney, David E. Kendall, to ask a federal judge to impose contempt penalties on Starr's office for allegedly divulging details from its investigation. Starr is examining whether Clinton committed perjury by denying a sexual relationship with Lewinsky in his deposition in the Jones sexual harassment suit or obstructed justice by encouraging the former White House intern and correspondence clerk to do the same.

Starr fired back with his own statement, saying leaked information about the investigation could have come from numerous people — including Clinton's own attorneys — and accusing the Clinton camp of trumping up complaints about leaks as part of "an orchestrated plan to deflect and distract this investigation."

While he said he has no evidence that leaks came from his office, Starr said he has started an internal investigation and other officials said he asked the Justice Department to assign him more FBI agents for the task.

The dispute was generated by articles in the New York Times and The Washington Post on Friday last week reporting that Clinton's personal secretary, Betty Currie, told investigators the president summoned her to the White House the day after his Jones deposition to seek her memories of his interactions with Lewinsky and see if they matched what he had just said under oath.

Neither Clinton nor his advisers denied the substance of the reports, but the president insisted he did not coach Currie to agree with his version of events.

"I never asked anybody to do anything but tell the truth," he said.

A Vulgar Stain on the White House

OPINION
George F. Will

SOME Clinton supporters defend him with a masterpiece of political minimalism: "Watergate was worse." Which is true. Watergate involved attempted corruption of institutions to punish a president's enemies and aggrandize his power. However, Clinton's crisis is in one aspect more menacing to the civic culture than Nixon's was because he must make the public a participant in his corruption. Call this the Queen of Hearts factor.

Having vulgarians like the Clintons conspicuous in government must further coarsen American life. This is already apparent in the emergence of a significant portion of the public that almost preens about supporting the Clintons because of the vulgarity beneath their pantomime of domesticity. Call this portion of the public the Europhile constituency.

Watergate divided Americans between those who believed Nixon guilty of abuses and of lying about them, and those who did not. However, no significant group said he was guilty but that they did not care because they approved of, say, his China policy.

Clinton today has an "even if" majority — a soft, perishable majority that answers "no" to a hypothetical question: Should Clinton resign even if he lied? But what happens when that hypothetical becomes actual — when "even if" becomes "even though"? Already few can manage the willful suspension of disbelief necessary to believe that: Gennifer Flowers' assertions and the contents of the Flowers-Clinton tapes are lies; Clinton had Paula Jones brought to his hotel room for decent reasons and she is lying about what happened there; Kathleen Willey is lying about Clinton groping her, placing her hand on his crotch and saying "I've always wanted to do that"; Monica Lewinsky spent 20 hours lying to Linda Tripp; the intense activity by Clinton, Vernon Jordan, the Ambassador to the United Nations and others on behalf of Lewinsky's career coincided with, but was unrelated to, her deposition concerning her relations with Clinton; and so on, and on.

More and more Americans are exclaiming, as Alice did in Through The Looking Glass, that "one can't believe impossible things." Clinton and his hirelings increasingly resemble the Queen of Hearts: "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." Clinton's tenure depends on corrupting the public by nurturing a constituency of Queens of Hearts.

Since his one emphatic denial of sexual relations with Lewinsky (as emphatic as Alger Hiss' denial about espionage, Nixon's about Watergate, O.J. Simpson's about murder), Clinton has been guided by the rule that silence is a difficult argument to refute. Staying silent, like invoking the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination, is his right, but invites an invidious inference.

For example, if reports that he met with Lewinsky on the evening of December 28 were wrong, the White House would have exuberantly refuted them. His silence about them justifies the surmise that the meeting occurred and the explanation would harm him.

His silence is a more portentous indicator of this crisis' long-term trajectory than are the lawyers' maneuverings or Hillary Clinton's smarmy accusations. For example, when she says North Carolina's Senators Helms and Faircloth "appointed" the judge that heads the three-judge panel that selected Starr — Faircloth was not even in the Senate when the judge was confirmed — she smears all three judges as participants in the vast conspiracy.

Some of those who say "he lied but so what?" are proudly affirming a particular notion of cultural maturity. These Americans — Clinton's Europhile constituency — endorse the European condescension that recurs when Americans worry about whether politicians should be exemplary individuals. Europe, and Americans who to take their intellectual bearings therefrom, say: Grow up, Americans. It is immature to judge politicians by other than quantifiable public consequences, such as the growth of GDP. Your quaint, ridiculous political sensibility, reflecting residual puritanism, prevents mature acceptance of this fallen world's naughtiness.

To which, this riposte is apposite: Europe's political sensibility, sometimes called "realism" and accurately called the demoralization of politics (politics in which the only important questions are, Do the trains run on time? Do the autobahns get built?), has been no impediment to the emergence of Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, Franco and Hitler. So spare us your tutorials on political sophistication.

Clinton's longest-lasting legacy will be a short-term recasting of Americans' political interest. He has caused a pain he does not feel: the sense millions of Americans have that something precious has been vandalized. The question is, Who should come next, to scrub from a revered institution the stain of the vulgarians?

Peddlers of Violence and Death

Colman McCarthy

SPOILS OF WAR
The Human Cost of America's Arms Trade
By John Tirman
Free Press. 310pp. $25

CRITICS of American militarism distinguish between hot violence and cold violence. Hot is the slaughtering of human beings close up, as in Vietnam when peasants were shot — "greased" was the term — because they may have been hiding Vietcong. Weapons fire, bloodied bodies drop. Cold violence occurs when boardroom decisions mean death and suffering to people well removed by time and geography.

In Spoils Of War John Tirman examines with dispassionate resolve and clarity the mechanics of cold violence — the specialty of arms lobbyists, corporate weapons-exporters, pro-military politicians, Washington policymakers and think-tank rationalizers who are remote from the gore and madness than can result when America's technology of death — fighter jets, attack helicopters, missiles, land mines, tanks, guns — is profitably sold to client states. Tirman's reporting, which is rich with historical allusions and fair-minded analysis of what he calls "the ingrained habits and shibboleths of the arms business," aligns well with the thought of the French worker-philosopher Simone Weil in 1945: "Whether the mask is labeled Fascism, Democracy or Dictatorship of the Proletariat, our great adversary remains the Apparatus — the bureaucracy, the police, the military . . . No matter what the circumstances, the worst betrayal will always be to subordinate ourselves to this Apparatus, and to trample underfoot, in its service, all human values in ourselves and in others."

In Tirman's mind, such subordination prevails today in the United States: "In a country now in the grip of a debate over 'values,' it is astounding that so little heed is given to the values underlying the promiscuous provision of lethal weaponry."

Tirman, executive director of the Winston Foundation for World Peace in Washington for the past 10 years, reports that in the mid-1990s the U.S. weapons industry had a 70 percent market share of sales to Third World nations. More than $200 billion worth of arms will have been exported by the end of the decade. With Spoils Of War, Tirman joins a worthy list of independent analysts who, in season and out, keep assembling the facts of America's modern arms trade. Among them are Seymour Melman, author of The Permanent War Economy; William Hartung of the World Policy Institute; Sanford Gottlieb, author of Defense Addiction: Can America Kick The Habit?; Ruth Sivard and her annual report, World Military And Social Expenditures; and A. Ernest Fitzgerald, author of High Priests Of Waste.

Spoils Of War differs journalistically from the toil of those authors by reporting from the field on how cold violence in the United States becomes hot violence in the villages of southeastern Turkey. In the name of quashing Kurdish dissent and guerrillas by military force, which meant avoiding any compromising to gain political solutions, in recent years Turkey's military has killed thousands of villagers and displaced 2.5 million. By Tirman's numbers, Ankara's military might

President Carter 'approved the largest sale of U.S. hardware in the decade'

as well be a satellite army of the United States. From 1984 to 1993, Turkey received $6 billion in military aid. During 1991 to 1995, Washington supplied four-fifths of Turkey's military imports.

As a partisan whose moral and political preferences favor non-violent means of conflict resolution, Tirman is obviously at odds with the ideas and actions of people in the arms industry and their legislative backers. His challenge as a writer is to lay out the facts non-ideologically so that his conclusion — that the human suffering in one war zone or another "is a symptom of a systematic malfunction in a decrepit and morally vacuous American foreign policy" — cannot be idly dismissed as just more liberal grousing against militarists.

Seasoned by years of work in Washington, Tirman ably meets the challenge. Strong sentiments are voiced without shrillness. The impact of factual and credible information carries his arguments. One of these is that president after president has not allowed the grisly results of the arms-export business to dampen support for arms corporations — Lockheed Martin, United Technologies, Sikorsky, General Dynamics and others — that sell abroad.

It may surprise some readers that Jimmy Carter was one of the enthusiasts. As a candidate in June 1976, Tirman reports, Carter preached: "We cannot be both the world's leading champion of peace and the world's leading supplier of the weapons of war." Once he was elected, however, the fervor vanished. Early in his presidency, Tirman writes, Carter "approved the largest sale of U.S. hardware in the decade — 200 advanced fighter jets to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel." Later he recommended sending the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), the "flying radar," an exceptionally advanced technology, to Iran and Saudi Arabia. Tirman quotes George Kennan's statement near the end of Carter's term: "Never since World War II has there been so far-reaching a militarization of thought and discourse in the capital. An unsuspecting stranger, plunged into its midst, could only conclude that the last hope of peaceful, nonmilitary solutions had been exhausted — that from now only weapons, however used, could count."

Tirman could have written a book three or four times as large as this one. He tells us little about the lives and personal histories of America's arms peddlers. What are their ethics? Which schools shaped their thinking? Which churches or synagogues? Do they visit the world's bloodied war zones to meet the families of people killed by their weapons? Tirman mentions Norman Augustine, the former chief executive of Lockheed Martin, America's largest weapons company, only once, and gives Ron Brown, the late secretary of commerce, glancing treatment. Tirman describes Brown as "the king of promoters" in his boosting the U.S arms industry on his countless trips abroad. Whole chapters on Augustine and Brown might have fleshed out Tirman's thesis that the weapons trade is run by human beings at the expense of other human beings.

Tirman's invaluable criticism — also on display in his earlier books, The Fallacy Of Star Wars and Empty Promise — isn't likely to run out of deeds worthy of scorn. In addition to the overall excellence of the reporting in Spoils Of War, it will remain topical for some time. The hot violence goes on.

Lighting the Way

Jeff Shesol

PILLAR OF FIRE
America in the King Years, 1963-65
By Taylor Branch
Simon & Schuster. 746pp. $30

IN PILLAR OF FIRE, the second volume of Taylor Branch's civil rights trilogy, Martin Luther King Jr. is nothing quite so simple as a man or myth. To Branch, King is a metaphor — "the best and most important metaphor for American history in the watershed postwar years." King is the "pillar of fire" of the book's title, buttressing the civil rights movement with his moral strength and energizing it with his rhetorical fervor.

Branch's first volume, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Parting The Waters, spanned a full decade; Pillar Of Fire covers less than three years. Still, these were, as Branch argues, "the movement's peak years." After the brutality of Birmingham in May 1963, Branch explains, "leaders of every rank groped for responses to a coming flood. Race, so long conceived as a distant element of nature, slow-moving as a bank of rain clouds, suddenly bubbled up everywhere to sweep away the prevailing notion that passion was the enemy rather than the friend of racial goodwill. Where reason had twaddled, a tide of emotion swept forward conviction that segregation was fragile and that human nature contained untapped reserves for improvement."

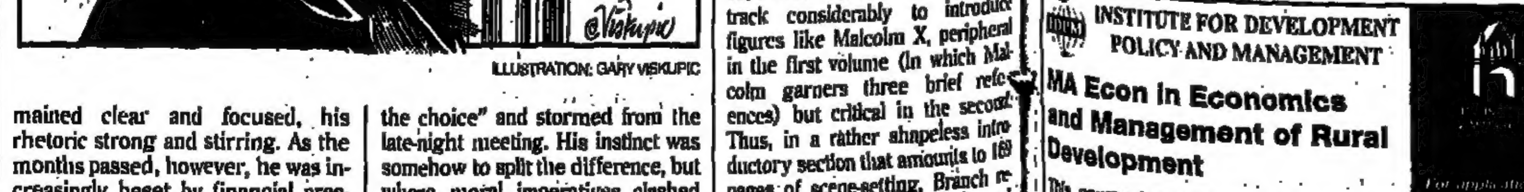
Branch describes the torrent that followed — Freedom Summer, the passage of the civil rights bill, the beatings in St. Augustine and riots in New York City, the murders of Medgar Evers and Malcolm X — in gripping detail, his prose moving swiftly and effortlessly from the White House to a Selma, Alabama, jail to Bogue Chitto Swamp in Mississippi, where the car of three murdered civil rights workers was found in June 1964. This is, for the most part, heavily trafficked territory, so Branch may be forgiven if Pillar Of Fire is neither as seminal nor as singular an achievement as Parting The Waters. But here, as before, Branch spins an intricate, seamless web of politics and personalities, triumph and tragedy.

The subtitle of Branch's trilogy is "America in the King Years." Yet it is worth noting that Pillar Of Fire begins not with a nonviolent victory but with a bloody battle between Black Muslims and Los Angeles police in 1962. This riot, virtually forgotten by historians, heralded the arrival of Malcolm X in the national arena, and from the first pages of Branch's book one senses that the political ground has shifted beneath King. Malcolm, the brash Muslim, was stealing the spotlight from nonviolent veterans like Ralph Abernathy and Roy Wilkins, who were quickly fading from view. The movement's triumphs notwithstanding, forgiveness was becoming a harder sell than "enemy-ism." In September 1963, after a dynamite blast killed four young girls in a Birmingham church, even some of King's advisers pressed him to lash out, to attack the oppressors. Yet King "renounced no one," Branch writes. "Instead, he exhorted listeners to bridge rather than exploit gulfs of separation. . . He wobbled on a sensitive spot, desperate to move but stuck in melancholy, confessing that his leadership was 'standing still, doing nothing, going nowhere.'"

Despite his own pessimism, King persevered: His moral vision re-



ILLUSTRATION: GARY VISKUPIC



mained clear and focused, his rhetoric strong and stirring. As the months passed, however, he was increasingly beset by financial pressures, beleaguered by jealous and feuding colleagues, stalked and intimidated by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, and haunted by the constant threat of violence. In 1964, an invitation to tour the Freedom Summer projects touched off a typically "ferocious dispute" among King's deputies, Branch writes. "Some aides protested that the movement could not offer King as the premium bull's-eye to Mississippi Klansmen who were killing civil rights workers already; others shouted that the movement could not shrink from violence. King himself raged against the choice" and stormed from the late-night meeting. His instinct was somehow to split the difference, but where moral imperatives clashed with political exigencies, compromise was impossible. "It was his course," Branch concludes, "but it was getting lonely."

King found no friend in Malcolm X. The two men met only once — a chance encounter in the halls of the U.S. Senate, where they shared a handshake and a smile for the cameras. More common was an earlier exchange in which Malcolm scorned King's tactics as "criminal" and King called Malcolm's approach "negative and desperate." Fundamental differences aside, Branch makes the persuasive (if counter-intuitive) claim that King and Malcolm were kindred spirits of sorts. Both were "tumbling through . . . extremes between punishment and acclaim, glamour and despair." Both were isolated by infighting associates and hounded by enemies known and unknown. Both were masters of improvisation. Both feared the assassin's bullet.

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. animate but do not dominate Branch's story. The author is as egalitarian as his subjects. Branch renders unsung activists like Vernon Dahmer, a Mississippi farmer, as carefully and completely as he does power players like Lyndon Johnson. Adam Clayton Powell, Allard Lowenstein, and a host of rabbis and clergymen make brief but memorable appearances in Pillar of Fire. Even Muhammad Ali, who was wooed by Malcolm before being won over by Elijah Muhammad, gets his own chapter.

The breadth of Branch's cast of characters is one of his book's greatest virtues. However, he must backtrack considerably to introduce figures like Malcolm X, peripheral in the first volume (in which Malcolm garners three brief references) but critical in the second. Thus, in a rather shapeless introductory section that amounts to 169 pages of scene-setting, Branch revisits events like Birmingham and the March on Washington, approaching them from different angles. Since it is not always clear where Branch is headed, this opening section, like those that follow, would benefit from clearer signposts.

Still, Pillar Of Fire is an indispensable book and an enduring achievement. It provides a clear-eyed, panoramic view of the civil rights community at a triumphal moment — the end of legal segregation — before violence and division tore the movement apart.

The economic downturn in the Far East could spell a funding crisis for British universities. **Donald MacLeod** reports

Asian treasure trove starts to sink

BRITISH universities are bracing themselves for a sharp drop in numbers of students from the Far East who currently bring in more than £300 million a year in revenue.

Shockwaves from the collapse of financial markets in the region could have severe repercussions for some institutions that have become increasingly dependent on fees from overseas students as the British government squeezed their income from home students.

Not only have universities aggressively recruited abroad over the past five or six years, but they have also steeply raised the level of fees for both undergraduates and postgraduates in their search for income.

Foreign students have in effect been subsidising their British classmates. In some subjects such as engineering, where it has been difficult to recruit home students, universities have been able to keep departments viable by making up numbers (and income) from abroad.

Institutions typically charge between £6,000 ($9,900) and £6,500 a year for classroom-based courses, £8,500 for laboratory courses and £15,500 for clinical courses. In the lucrative market for MBAs, courses vary widely, from around £5,900 to £12,000, according to a report last year by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore together send more students than any other country outside the European Union, apart from the United States. Several British institutions have also set up programmes in these countries, taught and validated by their staff. These are worth millions of pounds and are vulnerable to cutbacks as a result of the steep recession.

In Korea the government has banned non-essential foreign travel and the ministry of education has appealed to citizens to save foreign currency by not studying abroad.

"The situation will last two or three years. In the short term we will see a reduction from Korea and other Far Eastern countries," said Kevin Vancauter, of the British Council's marketing department.

Education agents who place Korean students abroad have registered a 30 to 40 per cent drop in inquiries. "It is symptomatic of what is happening over the whole region."

The British Council is putting a brave face on developments, hoping to hang on to existing numbers and seeing opportunities for distance learning and franchised courses in Pacific countries.

Plummeting markets in the Pacific are hitting British universities with a double whammy.

State-funded programmes to send students to study in Britain or set up joint ventures with British institutions are an easy target for cuts to balance budgets and satisfy the strict fiscal targets laid down by the International Monetary Fund.

Many students are privately funded, often by their families. Soaring interest rates and falling exchange rates will make it much more difficult. The thousands of Korean students in Britain will find this term's fees twice as expensive as they did in October because of the 50 per cent devaluation of the won. For the more numerous Malaysian students, a 40 per cent devaluation has made their plight almost as bad and will act as a deterrent to students thinking of applying to British universities this year.

In the economic turmoil

Counting on numbers

	1996/7 students in UK
[illegible]	[illegible]
Hong Kong	8,200
[illegible]	[illegible]
Japan	4,700
[illegible]	[illegible]
China	2,500
[illegible]	[illegible]
South Korea	1,800

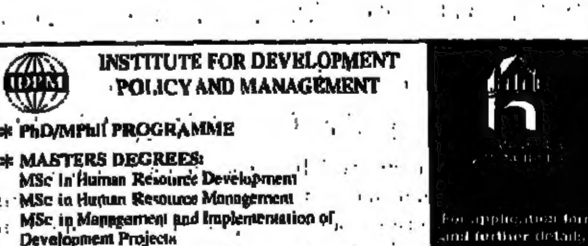
Source: HESA

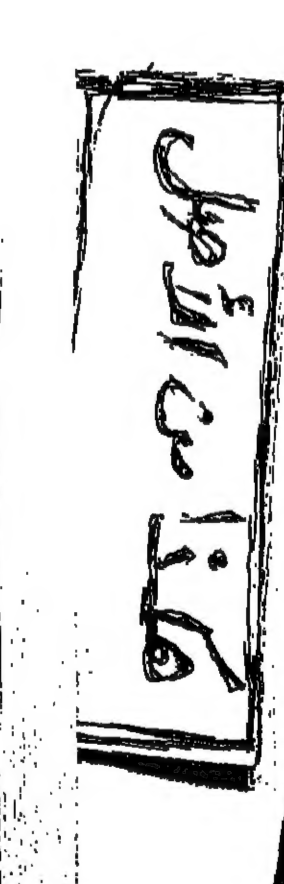
Pacific-based companies as well as government departments are likely to recruit fewer graduates, making the risks of foreign study all the greater for prospective students.

The crash has come at a bad time for universities, hitting them financially before the imposition of tuition fees on home students will start to provide extra income.

Ministers will doubtless exhort universities to find other areas to recruit from, but they will find it difficult. The long colonial links meant large numbers of students were proficient in English — not the case in Latin America or the Middle East. Africa and the Indian subcontinent have the language links but not the booming Tiger economies which — until a few months ago — could finance large numbers of students abroad.







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Botswana	L Inorganic Chemistry	W46396
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Botswana	L Public Education	W46404
NUST Zimbabwe	P Architecture	W46437
NUST Zimbabwe	AP/SL/L Architecture	W46438
NUST Zimbabwe	AP/SL/L Quantity Surveying	W46439
Swaziland	P/AP/SL/L Agricultural Education & Extension	W46416
Swaziland	P/AP/SL/L Agricultural Education & Extension (Supervision & Internship)	W46417
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Swaziland	AP/SL/L Management (Organisational Behaviour/HRM/Industrial Relations)	W46419
Swaziland	AP/SL/L Management (Production Management/Management Science)	W46420
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Swaziland	SL/L Curriculum Studies in Religious Education	W46423
Swaziland	AP/SL/L Geography	W46424
Swaziland	P/AP/SL/L Environmental Health Sciences	W46425
Swaziland	P/AP/SL/L Educational Foundations & Management	W46426
Swaziland	P/AP/SL Chemistry	W46427
Swaziland	P/AP/SL/L Physics (Solid State/Nuclear)	W46428
Swaziland	P/AP/SL/L Physics (Solid State/Electronics)	W46429
Swaziland	P/AP/SL/L Electronic Engineering	W46430
Swaziland	P/AP Sociology	W46431
Swaziland	P/AP/SL/L Statistics	W46432
Swaziland	AP/SL/L - Coordinator Academic Studies Unit	W46433
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UWI (Jamaica)	P/SL Library & Information Studies	W46436
AUSTRALIA		
ANU (Canberra)	P International Relations	W46406
Griffith (Queensland)	P Cultural & Media Policy/Cultural & Media Studies	W46401
Griffith (Queensland)	SL/L Accounting	W46402
Queensland	AP/SL/L Pedagogy of Human Movement	W46410
Tasmania	P & Head, School of Government	W46407
Tasmania	AP & Director, Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music	W46408
Tasmania	Director of Riawunna & AP Aboriginal Studies	W46409
HONG KONG		
Hong Kong Polytechnic Univ.	Chair of Accountancy	W46398
NEW ZEALAND		
Auckland Institute of Technology	Head, Psychotherapy & Applied Psychology	W46442
Canterbury	SL/L Clinical Psychology	W46411
Canterbury	L Chinese History	W46412
Canterbury	L Forest Harvesting & Transport	W46413
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Canterbury	L Human Resource Management/ Organisational Behaviour	W46415
UNITED KINGDOM		
Oxford	P Comparative European Politics	W46399
Oxford	P Commercial & Financial Law	W46400
Oxford	P Economics	W46434
Oxford	P Medicine	W46435
Oxford	P Management Studies	W46440

Abbreviations: P - Professor; AP - Associate Professor; SL - Senior Lecturer; L - Lecturer.

For further details of any of the above staff vacancies please contact the Appointments Department, ACU, 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, UK (internat. tel. +44 171 387 8572 ext. 206 (UK office hours); fax +44 171 383 0368; e-mail: appts@acu.ac.uk), quoting reference number of post(s). Details will be sent by airmail/first class post. A sample copy of the publication *Appointments in Commonwealth Universities*, including subscription details, is available from the same source.



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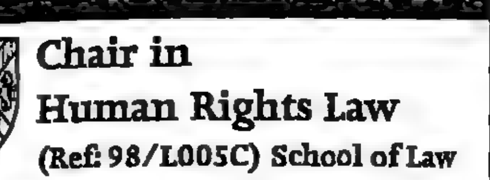
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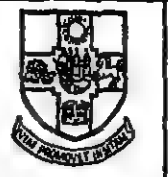


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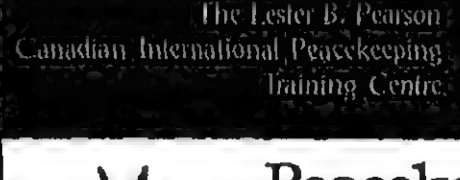
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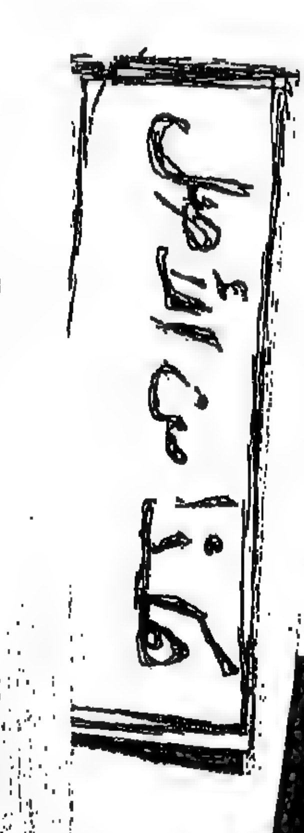


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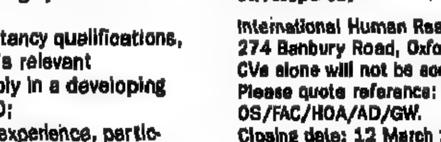
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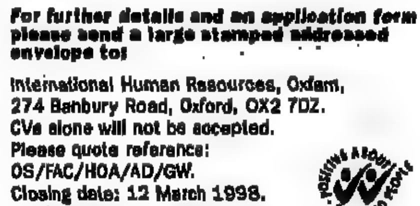
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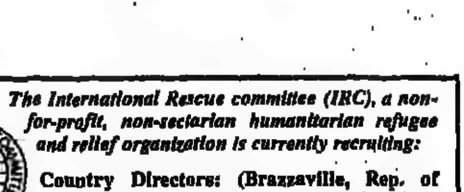




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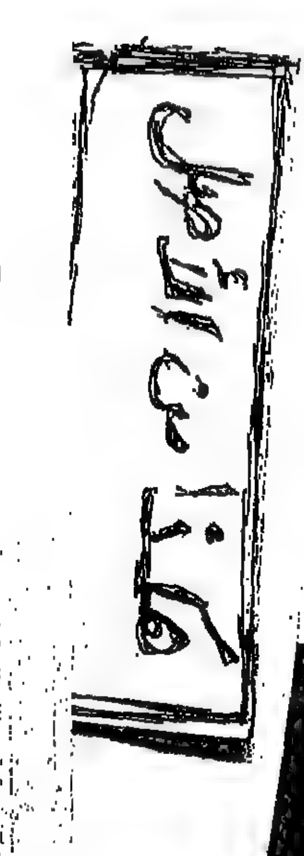
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An enigma of awkward passions

Enoch Powell



Powell with Edward Heath, who sacked him PHOTO: NEIL LIBBERT

THE word most people settled for in trying to describe Enoch Powell, who has died aged 85, was — leaving out the ruder ones — enigmatic. Scholar, soldier, statesman, arch-rebel, philosopher, poet, all crowded so glitteringly into so few early years. Here surely was something to wonder at, this neo-Renaissance figure with a Black Country accent. At the end of the story, the enigma had still not been solved. For we also had a monument of self-contradiction — a man of the hard right who could be a sensitive social reformer, a deeply committed Tory who could urge his colleagues to conspire with the enemy, a master of words who could use them with what many saw as gross irresponsibility, a devout loyalist who could lecture his queen, an atheist and a High Anglican.

Rational and romantic were at war in him, and it was not always the romantic that won. Nor was there anything obviously romantic, though there might have been to the eye of a Balzac or an Arnold Bennett, about the appearance and manner of this tense, unsmiling man. He looked more like a member of some obscure town council than one of the most controversial politicians of his day. Provincialism was of his essence; English Midland provincialism at that, and there is none more introverted. But a Welsh ancestry fired his complex nature. His parents were teachers, and he seemed born to exert diligence and acquire merit. He shone at King Edward's School in his native Birmingham and was a highly successful prize-winning student at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became a fellow in the mid-1930s.

By the time he was 25, he was Professor of Greek at Sydney university, and a second world war brigadier not long after. Characteristically he had rushed home from Australia to enlist as a private in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and promotion came quickly — as it did in all he put his hand and mind to, except his chosen career of politics.

Powell worked for the Conservative Research Department, collaborating with Angus Maude on the pamphlet One Nation, and entered Parliament on the Tory wave of 1950. Powell's Birmingham voice and Wolverhampton constituency soon provided a new English centre of gravity there. A third dominant characteristic, probably linked with his provincialism and his romanticism, made itself felt. This was the urge to make a gesture, to stand conspicuously apart, to pit himself against established orthodoxies in his own party. He started in a small way, brushing with his local Conservative Association. It was as though he was rehearsing for major rebellions.

The first came in 1958, when as Financial Secretary to the Treasury, he resigned with Peter (later Lord) Thorneycroft, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Nigel Birch, the Economic Secretary, in protest against the Government's refusal to hold back public expenditure to a level acceptable to them — the episode which Harold Macmillan christened "a little local difficulty". The second was when he stood out against the king-making convulsions in the Conservative party which led to Sir Alec Douglas Home's succession.

The third, and by far the most sensational, gesture compelled Heath to sack him from the shadow cabinet in April 1968, because of the "rivers of blood" speech he made in Birmingham about immigration. It was made without consulting any of his colleagues, who criticised it more for the intemperance of its language than for its basic message. Those who had been patiently working for better race relations bitterly criticised that too.

Whether Powell was truly a racialist is a matter of semantics. (Ironically, his bravest and most passionate speech at Westminster had demanded the exposure of British maltreatment of Mau Mau suspects in Kenya, a decade earlier.) Whether or not he calculated the result of the Birmingham speech in advance — there were few who believed he did not — they were easily foreseen and the outcome was ugly. He raised fears and hatreds to a state of tension overnight. A pro-Powell campaign reached a pitch of near-hysteria and there were some unpleasant incidents.

The next phase of his career was marked by some searing attacks on political hypocrisy. Though ostensibly over his bitter opposition to the European Community and Britain's part in it, the abandonment, in 1974, of his Wolverhampton seat and the Conservative party looked like self-punishment, almost a kind of self-mutilation for a man with his advanced sense of loyalty.

He was afraid that the credibility gap between parliament and people was growing all the time, as was the need "to match the person to the institution". His personal attempt to do this, as he explained with a flash of the charm he could deploy when he chose, was to change "the ugly accent compounded of Birmingham, Staffordshire and Australia" for the "beautiful lilting language of Ulster". But it was a deeper change he really sought; it was the best, indeed the only, chance in sight of taking another stand against the demon of ambiguity and double talk.

As Ulster Unionist Member for South Down (1983-87) he lived in the world of absolutes, of jet blacks and shining whites. In that sense, if in no other, he was at home. Asked in an unguarded moment during an interview how often he went to Ireland he replied coldly that he never went to Ireland but frequently went to Ulster. The continuing atrocities, in particular the Harrods bombing, he blamed on "double talk and double-dealing on the part of Britain, which has kept the IRA and their fellow murderers in business these last dozen years".

In December 1985 he resigned his seat in protest against the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and was re-elected at the ensuing byelection — but at the next general election, in 1987, he was out of Parliament and it would have taken a brave prime minister to send him to the Lords as a parting present. It never happened.

His last book, The Evolution Of The Gospel (1994), was typically challenging, raising questions about how Christ might have died. Powell never grew old gracefully.

He is survived by his wife Pamela, whom he married in 1952, and two daughters.

Norman Shrapnel

John Enoch Powell, politician, born June 16, 1912; died February 8, 1998

Small wonder: Ralph Merkle uses computer simulations to demonstrate how tiny machines can be built

Dawn of the diamond age

Alchemy is back in fashion, but this time the aim is to turn coal into priceless diamond fibres, reports **Michael Brooks**

AT NASA'S research labs in the heart of Silicon Valley, alchemy is back in fashion. But turning base metals into gold is an old dream; the new alchemists are trying to turn coal into diamond. Re-arranging carbon atoms to build diamond-based materials would release a range of powerful new technologies — from silicon chips to spaceships. The patent on the first diamond fibre will be almost priceless, and competition among United States research corporations is hotting up. Negotiations are under way to bring Europe into the race.

Riverland, a company based in Brussels, is about to set up the European Centre for Nanotechnology, the field that deals in elements measured on the atomic scale, in millionths of millimetres. The centre will be run as a non-profitmaking institution, and Riverland hopes that the Foresight Institute — a non-profitmaking educational organisation set up in the US by nanotechnology pioneer Eric Drexler — will be a key partner.

But Riverland's interest is not philanthropic: the company specialises in hiring the brains to grab future technologies. Its own research and sponsorship of organisations such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media-Lab has gained the company patents in many promising areas, including quantum computing. There are significant brains to be picked in Europe, most of them in IBM's Zürich laboratory, where nano-engineers performed the first atomic manipulation, spelling out "IBM" with 35 xenon atoms.

This is the root of the nanotechnology dream: building structures from the bottom up. The principle is simple: if you can rearrange the atoms in something, you can make something else. On a ham-fisted level, engineers are already re-arranging the atoms in sand, adding some impurities and making silicon computer chips. The first people to rearrange single atoms of carbon, so that the bonds between graphite molecules are restructured to produce diamond molecules, will be instant millionaires.

In engineering terms, diamond is potentially the most useful material in existence. It is fantastically strong: carbon atoms form especially powerful bonds between themselves, and in diamond they are arranged to perfection, giving the stiffest structure possible.

Diamond is also very light: a 747 jumbo jet made of diamond fibres would be 50 times lighter than today's versions, without any loss of strength. The payload advantages for space travel mean that launch costs could be cut from $40,000 to around $300 per kilo. No wonder Nasa is interested.

Diamond fibres are still a distant dream, but the next best thing has already arrived. Carbon nanotubes — rolled-up sheets of graphite less than a nanometre in diameter — are comparable to diamond in their strength along the tube's length. Recent advances in the manufacture of nanotubes and buckyballs (their spherical counterpart) have woken a slumbering field.

It has already drawn the gaze of Nasa, IBM, and even the Pentagon. The White House has set up a division to look into the military potential of nanotechnology.

Policymakers are timetabling research well into the next century. America's National Science Foundation recently made $10 million available for researchers willing to cross disciplines. "The potential pay-off is staggering, even if it will take some decades to develop," says Ralph Merkle, head of computational nanotechnology at the office equipment manufacturer Xerox and a director at Foresight. "Clearly, appropriately focused research in this area will speed development."

Merkle left a career in computer science and cryptography to develop computational models for nanotechnology. Such willingness to trample on traditional subject boundaries is a trademark of nanotechnologists.

Riverland hopes that researchers of Merkle's calibre will be drawn to work at the European Centre for Nanotechnology. "It's hard to find good people: you have to find those who are prepared to lose the frameworks they have been taught," says Walter De Brouwer, managing director of Riverland. He describes the ideal candidates as "computer-focused biomolecular engineers."

Nanotechnology aims to use biological systems as models of what can be built through the systematic manipulation of atoms and molecules. For example, the natural kinesin motor, which transports material inside cells, has been highlighted by Nasa as a possible basis for molecular gears. A carbon nanotube studded with benzene teeth could be used to make gears two nanometres across — six times smaller than the kinesin motor.

IDEAS such as this are theoretically possible, and exist inside computer simulations. The foundations for their emergence from the virtual world are already being laid. "Experimental work, though still far from demonstrating all that should be feasible, provides clear support for the basic capabilities," says Merkle. "It's clear we can move atoms and molecules in a controlled way." But diamond fibre production will require much more sophisticated techniques than anything yet possible.

Discovering this technology will require huge investment, but researchers are confident that the production costs for nanomaterials will plummet dramatically after a few technological generations.

No one in the field expects nanotechnology research to pay any dividends until the middle of the next century. De Brouwer, too, is aware that the European initiative is unlikely to accelerate research enough for his investment to reap much benefit. On the plus side, he says, at least he has no rivals. "When you're going to lose money, you don't find any competition."

Eight million people are Internet addicts. The condition can be as bad as alcoholism. **Roger Dobson** logs on

Caught in the Web

Dear Dr Young, My name is Ellen and I live in Pittsburgh. Today my husband of 15 years told me he's leaving to go and live with a woman in Australia whom he met on the Internet three months ago. I am shocked. They have never met. My husband has never been out of the country. Now she's finding him a job in Australia and he's got his plane ticket. How could this have happened? What do I do?

IT CAN consume up to 80 hours a week, wreck relationships and damage health, and it is the world's fastest growing addiction. Internet abuse has created millions of on-line addicts who suffer withdrawal symptoms when they switch off their computer, and have panic attacks if they have no e-mail. They suffer cyber shakes and screen sickness, and are more likely to have terminal love or virtual affairs with strangers than talk to their partner — the cyberwidows.

But despite showing symptoms of the behaviour more traditionally associated with addiction to alcohol and gambling, only a tiny handful of Internet addicts seek the counselling they need, according to Dr Kimberley Young of the University of Pittsburgh, who founded the Center for On-Line Addiction.

In the first book to offer health tips to the estimated 8.1 million addicts who each spend more than 40 hours a week online, Young spells out how to kick the habit and get back into the real world. Internet addiction, says Young, is as serious as other addictions and can lead to the loss of jobs, partners, and money. More than half of addicts have a previous history of depression or have been treated for other addictions.

As with alcohol abuse, it is difficult to tell when entertainment becomes addiction. Suspect behaviour, Young says, includes lying about the amount of time and money spent being online, neglect of other work, a preference for the Internet over a partner, a tendency to dream about the worldwide web, and a withdrawal from social contacts. Other symptoms include changed sleep patterns, loss of interest in (real) sex, fatigue, decline in other hobbies, and withdrawal from friends. And the people most at risk of addiction are middle-aged housewives and students.

Young has also discovered that the people who become addicted have much in common: "Some form of escape usually lies at the heart of the Internet addiction. Many of these people are depressed and lonely, held back by low self-esteem, insecurity and anxiety. Maybe they're unhappy in their relationships or in their jobs," she says.

The big attraction of the Internet is that it allows them to escape into a fantasy world at any time of the day or night. "It's a form of escape that allows people to forget their problems for a time, just like alcoholics use alcohol," she says.

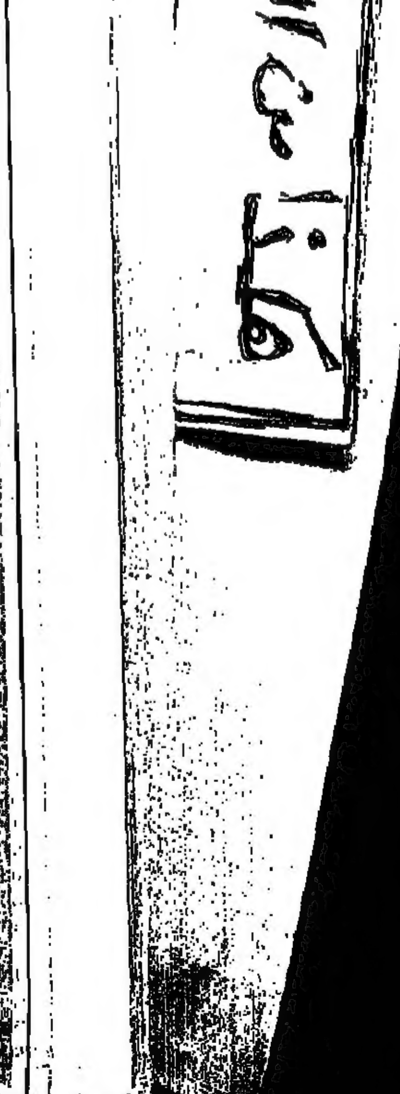
Some addicts spend up to $800 a month on online activities. According to her research, 82 per cent of Internet users have tried to cut down on the time they spend surfing the Net, but have failed. "It is common to lose control over your Internet usage," she says. "Some people I spoke with tried to quit cold turkey, but failed to anticipate the real withdrawal symptoms that would follow, or they lacked the resources to develop healthy, positive alternatives," she says. But, she adds, it is possible to cut down on Internet use without having to give it up.

Her recovery strategies include having breakfast before opening your e-mail, setting time limits on your usage, and recognising the triggers that make you want to switch on, like a family row. As with other addictions, an ability to recognise denial symptoms is important. Moving the computer to a more public position also helps to discourage long usage. Widening social contacts is also important, and so too is group therapy.

Caught In The Net, by Kimberley Young, is published in March by John Wiley, price £17.99



An Internet addict is...
- Preoccupied with the internet, always wanting to go online for longer periods
- Always unsuccessfully trying to cut back



What's in a name?

MUSIC
John Fordham

THE proprietor of The Vortex, the London jazz club, was musing on the nature of defining labels. The problem was to find a term that would cover that strange and simmering broth of marching-music, circus melodrama, folky jauntiness, Mothers of Invention melodic feverishness, straight jazz, South African townships music and innumerable other influences that is made by younger players in Britain. "People ring up to ask what's on," he said. "I can't exactly tell them it's jazz. It doesn't have a name yet."

Such is the music of the Huw Warren Barrel Organ band. Needless to say, there's no barrel organ in it, though the way Warren organises his strings and reed sections it sometimes sounds as if there is. A frequent piano collaborator with various former Loose Tubers, Warren would be one of the most formidable newcomers on the British scene as a keyboard improviser alone: he marshals sinewy lines of unpredictable melody, jabbing chords and double-time in a manner reminiscent of the brilliant sixties acoustic playing of Paul Bley. But Warren is also emerging as an original writer, even if the word "jazz" hardly squares with the result.

He is currently doing the rounds to promote his new Babel Label album, A Barrel Organ Far From Home. His band features violin, viola and cello, double bass, penny whistle, clarinet, sax and piano, so it's hardly Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Yet improvisation is central to the impact of the music, and although there was a little tentativeness to the first set, the writing was intensely absorbing and the blowing sprang out of it seamlessly. At several points, the ease with which the musicians moved between notation, total freedom and supportive freedom became a thing of wonder. It's increasingly clear that most sophisticated musicians of the coming century — classical, jazz, or the name yet to be invented, will know how to do it as a matter of course.

The band opened with free improvisation, moved gradually to an oompah two-beat, passed through a jumpy Kurt Weillian ostinato and shouting, watch-out Hitchcockian chords, and touched here and there on jubilant passages of straight-ahead jazz swing. The windblown desolation of the title track was beautifully captured, and the ensemble-playing was mostly terrific — with Steve Arguelles's drums characteristically sympathetic at every turn. A great prospect.





Sublime or ridiculous? Left, Triptych May-June 1973 (centre panel); right, Portrait of Lucian Freud, 1965

This too, too squalid flesh

ART
Adrian Searle

A SUSPICIOUS-LOOKING cove sidled out of the gloom at the Hayward's latest show and whispered: "La Comédie Humaine?" as he passed. Francis Bacon exhibitions attract these unsavoury types, especially on press days. "Grand Guignol," I instantly replied, an old hand at rebuffing these critical come-ons. That, for most of us, just about does it for Bacon, as cliché upon cliché agglutinates to Bacon's reputation in much the same way that skids of paint stick to the artist's portraits.

All that existential anguish stuff is old hat, but what more is there to say? What more is there? David Sylvester, who has curated more Bacon shows than most, has an even harder time wrestling something new from the artist's work. Sylvester's last Bacon outings — in Venice in 1993, and in Paris in 1996, were both mammoth retrospectives. For the first proper show in Britain since the artist died in 1992, only the lower half of London's Hayward Gallery has been set aside, and the show, running until April 5, contains just 23 paintings.

The lighting is low, and the gallery has been stripped back, its dividing walls removed so that the works are given plenty of room to breathe, or choke, or whatever it is that Bacon's paintings do, against austere grey walls. What do Bacon's claustrophobic paintings breathe — ether?

Sylvester has given us a spare, sparse show titled Francis Bacon: The Human Body. Apart from a few dogs, a monkey or two, the occasional sphinx and the odd mangled monster from the collective unconscious, Bacon never painted anything but the human body, or bits of it. Sylvester's latest pitch has the critic quoting Joshua Reynolds on Michelangelo: "I think I have seen figures by him, of which it was very difficult to determine whether they were in the highest degree sublime or extremely ridiculous." This is apt. Nowadays we have problems with the sublime. Where is it? Do they do charter flights? Bacon's work, on the other hand, is altogether too trapped inside bodies and rooms and edgy, frantic moments to take us out of ourselves. A figure "nailed to a mattress" with a hypodermic, a man hunched on the toilet or being sick in a sink, are clearly intimations of something other than the sublime.

In Bacon's paintings people lie around on beds, sit on chairs, walk into the shower and go to the lavatory. But there's nothing of the everyday about them. Or, at least, their everydays are worse than yours or mine, we hope.

Sometimes Bacon's figures have all the vividness of the living. At other times they seem no more than cartoons of wretchedness, frenetic smears, piles of brushwork. And things that shouldn't work — a bendy toy, vaguely Japanese calligraphic curvaciousness, filled in with gritty, curdled, compound, overpainted gestures — manifestly do. That's one of the things about Bacon: his painting — as painting — is even more perverse than his subjects. Of course, some pictures just don't come off: Bacon can be great and terrible, and just terrible, all at once.

The more we learn about the artist's life, the more we notice the subtexts of anger and loss. The dark-suited figures on even darker grounds turn out to be Peter Lacy, a dissolute fighter pilot who played piano in bars in Tangiers, and with whom Bacon had a difficult affair in the fifties. Or George Dyer, the artist's lover and subject of many later paintings, who died on the toilet in Paris on the eve of Bacon's first French retrospective, in 1971. The ghastly (in the best sense) Triptych May-June 1973 is Bacon's record of the event. This painting is a squalid lament, a record of confrontation with the most awful tragedy. The human comedy, indeed.

This is a more memorable Bacon show than most. It looks great. It also contains some paintings unfamiliar to British audiences, including the strangest of Bacon's Velázquez-inspired Popes. Study For A Pope IV, 1961, is how one imagines Edvard Munch would have painted King Lear. The Pope has a skull-like idiot grin, and looks down at his peculiarly extruded, madly (or badly) painted hands. There's something frightening in the very thinness of the paint, the sickly swooning curves of the papal skirts, the lividness of the figure against the blackened-green severity of the minimal throne.

Perhaps one of the best things about Bacon is that he could pull off images that in many respects could not possibly succeed. Bacon's work is amazingly seductive (even in its repulsiveness), artificial and utterly shameless. But does it tell us anything about ourselves, does it evince the human malaise? I think it's too theatrical for that, too much a self-dramatist's diary. But art is artificial — a representation of the world rather than the world itself.

That said, a strange unease overcame me as I popped into the toilet at the Hayward. The space was claustrophobic. The toilet bowl threatened. I felt like a Bacon figure, trapped in an overlit room. I closed the door and heard someone shuffling on the other side, a tap being run. A cough, and then a voice. "Grand Guignol?" it said.

Ghosts of the past

THEATRE
Michael Billington

REMEMBER Stanislawa Przybyszewska? Perhaps not. But her hefty dramatisation of the French Revolution — The Danton Affair — was both the source of an Andrzej Wajda movie and of a play Pam Gems adapted for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1986. Now Gems has turned the spotlight on the writer herself in Sphinx's touring production of *The Snow Palace*. I caught it in Farnham's Redgrave Theatre, and the occasion was notable chiefly for a startling performance by Kathryn Pogson.

Gems's intention is to suggest that her heroine, who lived a tragically brief life from 1901 to 1935, poured much of her idealism and intensity into her obsessive study of Robespierre and Danton. We see her scribbling furiously in a frosty Gdansk schoolroom, sustained only by money from a kindly aunt and her own morphine addiction. As she writes, her characters come to life before her and she is drawn into the eternal battle between Robespierre's rigorous revolutionary purity and Danton's accommodation of human fallibility.

Gems certainly conveys the frenzied solitude of creativity. "I am alone in order to work, and cope with loneliness by working," says her heroine, which might be the cry of dramatists everywhere. More questionable is Gems's assumption that Stanislawa's increasing hostility to Danton was coloured by her rejection of her natural father, who here drunkenly attempts to rape and kill her. Her wild, Satanic father, a friend of Strindberg's and Munch's, was certainly arrested for the supposed murder of his common-law wife. But to suggest that Stanislawa, in dramatising the death of Danton, was symbolically disposing of her own demonic dad is both to diminish the heroine and provide too pat a Freudian motive.

The lady is a Vamp . . . Helen Pearson in Miss Roach's War

What Gems does do, as so often, is to offer a gift of a part for a lead performer — one that Pogson avidly seizes. She conveys the idea that creativity is, as Borges said, a "voluntary dream". With her haunted, staring eyes Pogson seems to be living in the world of the French Revolution, at one point drawing Danton into her orbit with a strange serpentine hiss and at all times seeking to protect Robespierre from his fate.

Robert Willox, doubling as Danton and Stanislawa's father, and Kenn Sabberton, as the sea-green, incorruptible Robespierre, provide stalwart support in Janet Suzman's beautifully atmospheric production. But it is the image of the shivering Pogson haunted by ghosts of the past that I shall long remember.

Not only was Patrick Hamilton, author of Rope and Gaslight, a considerable dramatist, his novels also adapt easily to the stage. *Miss Roach's War*, Richard Kane's version of The Slaves Of Solitude at the Croydon Warehouse, conveys two things exceptionally well: the brutal power-politics of the provincial boarding house, and the exhaustion of England in 1943.

We are struck by the fear and solitude of the denizens of a shabby-genteel residential hotel, here played by members of the Attic Theatre Company.

Miss Roach, a primly cautious publisher's secretary, first loses her American boyfriend to the vampish German émigrée Vicki Kugelmann (played by Helen Pearson), then finds herself victimised by the boarding house bully, Mr Thwaites.

Thwaites, played with sonorous fervour by Kane himself, leaps off the page into theatrical life. He deploys a florid, pseudo literary rhetoric — "And didst thou imbibe might potions from the fruit of the grape?" — that masks both loneliness and cruelty. What becomes clear, as Thwaites sides with the teasing Teuton to persecute Miss Roach, is that the boarding-house drama eerily echoes global fascism, a point underscored by the use of Pathé News bulletins to haunt Miss Roach's dreams.

Kane's version sacrifices some of the novel's characters, but Jenny Lee's production captures perfectly the wartime atmosphere and Hamilton's sympathy with the spiritually homeless. Chloe Salaman's Miss Roach displays just the right quaking inhibition.

For once, a justified adaptation.

A great glam lie

CINEMA
Richard Williams

I WATCHED most of The Ice Storm through the gaps between my fingers. Alone of all the recent cinematic trips back to the 1970s, Ang Lee's film exposes the true awfulness of that benighted decade. Only those who arrived in the era of waterbeds and Watergate fresh from a sixties adolescence can really know what a dreadful time it was, and how we yearned for an end to its procession of tawdry betrayals. Ang Lee is clearly one of us.

It's 1973. Amid the larch groves and winding trails of suburban Connecticut, Ben and Elena Hood (Kevin Kline and Joan Allen) are bringing up a young family, struggling with the need to turn the new social and sexual freedoms into a mature *modus vivendi*. The self-satisfied Ben, some sort of medium-level executive, is embroiled in an affair with a neighbour's wife, Janey Carver (Sigourney Weaver). Both his women have chosen their modes of self-presentation from fashionable off-the-peg styles. Janey is Jackie Collins, big-haired, dark and predatory, her purple shirt slashed to the waist. Elena is Faye Dunaway, superficially cool and sleek, the Nordic model, but with nerves jangling beneath a fragile stoicism that crumbles into an episode of minor shoplifting.

Inside the deracinated architecture of their insubstantial houses — white clapboard for the Hoods, rectangular modern for the Carvers — the children are the obvious victims of these rudderless, discontented people. At the age of 14, Wendy Hood (Christina Ricci) has a bundle of appetites barely contained by her crocheted tank-tops. "I'll show you mine if you show me yours" is her line to both Carver boys, Mikey (Elijah Wood) and the barely pubescent Sandy (Adam Hann-Byrd). Her brother Paul (Tobey Maguire), two years older, is already making his break, escaping the family's Thanksgiving celebrations to meet a girl in New York for a night of dope and heavy rock.

The Ice Storm is interspersed with many moments of hideously accurate social satire — such as the brief appearance of a minister of religion, a prototype New Age figure spookily blending the face of Hugh Hefner with the hair of a pomp-rock hero — but it is more than just a visit to a cultural theme park. James Schamus's screenplay, adapted from Rick Moody's novel, is candid in its examination of a time in which established patterns of adult behaviour were starting to disintegrate, with long-term implications that are still far from clear.

Ang Lee begins the film with the striking image of a frozen commuter train, stranded by a night-time ice storm, getting under way at dawn in a crackle of sparks from the overhead wires. It's a flash-forward. Paul is on the train, returning home from his New York date. When he arrives, he will discover the consequences of a disastrous climax to the holiday.

A weekend of tensions — spats and silences at all generational levels — have led up to the big set-piece, a party at a neighbour's mansion. The men throw their car keys into a bowl. At the end of the evening, the women pick out a set and go home with the owner. A double-tableau — men on one side and women on the other, confronting each other in a mass sartorial catastrophe — has us in stitches, crippled with embarrassment or incredulity, but its dramatic purpose strikes deeper. Outside, as the moment of truth reveals itself, the storm is covering this safe, comfortable world with a blanket of ice. Throughout the film, footholds have been uncertain; now the characters forfeit their last vestiges of self-control.

This insistence on sticking to the allegorical rules is both the film's strength and its weakness. Subtly written, wittily designed and cleverly acted (most of all by the remarkable Ricci), brilliantly photographed by Frederick Elmes (whose credits include Cassavetes' The Killing Of A Chinese Bookie, Lynch's Blue Velvet and Jarmusch's Night On Earth), and stealthily edited by Tim Squyres, its various strands are plaited with beguiling skill. Only in the use of Paul as a narrator, reflecting on the meaning of the events from the vantage point of a later time, does it lack conviction.

This is a solid and entertaining film, sustaining the director's reputation for the careful handling of intelligent material. As a piece of human truth, however, the story's neatness makes it somehow less persuasive and affecting than we might have expected it to be. These unhappy characters are certainly in the grip of something, but it seems less like fate than the formal demands of a parable.



Sigourney Weaver bristles in Ang Lee's The Ice Storm

In Clubbed to Death, the second feature by Yolande Zauberman, Elodie Bouchez — the young star of Les Roseaux Sauvages and A Toute Vitesse — plays Lola, a pretty girl who goes clubbing in some strange hinterland outside Paris. There she falls for an Arab boy (Roschdy Zem) who lives with a dancer (Béatrice Dalle, showing some courage in playing directly opposite a younger version of her old self).

Music by the Chemical Brothers, Daft Punk, Massive Attack and others combines with Denis Lenoir's stylish colour-washed photography to recreate the ambience of rave culture, shifting from the euphoria of night to daylight comedown. Zauberman's Parisian banlieue, as surrealistic as the version of Ravenna created by Antonioni for The Red Desert, is the most striking vision of contemporary France we have seen since La Haine. This may not be a very profound film, but it certainly speaks of and to its time.

Enchanted Tchaikovsky

OPERA
Tim Ashley

IT WAS, perhaps, a foregone conclusion that the Royal Opera's unearthing of Tchaikovsky's The Enchantress would make musical history.

The formula was well-nigh perfect: take a lost work that has been savaged by the censors, perform it virtually uncut, hire a conductor who is one of the finest musicians of the late 20th century, and finally find five great Russian singers who have Tchaikovsky in their blood. The result at the Royal Festival Hall has put the opera back on the map and will set the standard for any future performances.

The Enchantress has a reputation for being tricky, abstruse and over-complex. Its plot — an amoral, assertive woman struggles to maintain dignity and independence in a world that equates female sexuality with sorcery — ensured chronic bowdlerisation, particularly in the Soviet Union. And its astonishing emotional and dramatic range has led to the charge of musical unevenness.

Valery Gergiev welds it together to form an unremitting span that makes the work's four hours fly by. He obtains wonderful, dark-hued playing from the Royal Opera orchestra, and Galina Gorchakova is by turns seductive, vulnerable and tough as the heroine Nastasia.

Larissa Diadkova is indomitable as the appalling matriarch Yevpraksia. Nikolai Putilin, gritty-voiced and anguished, is her husband Nikita, terrifying in his gradual descent into insanity. It's a thrilling evening.

Andrew Clements adds: In between rehearsals for The Enchantress last week, Gergiev also found time to bring the Kirov Opera's orchestra to the Barbican.

It was an outstanding event that not only underlined the quality of the ensemble he has produced in St Petersburg, but was a reminder that Gergiev can generate as much excitement and drama in the concert hall as in the opera house.

The concert opened with the prelude to the first act of Wagner's Lohengrin — rapt, limpid and surely paced — but its heart was Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto, with the Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes as soloist.

The magician's secret lies in a flat stomach

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

BREAKING the Magician's Code (Sky 1), which showed how the best known stage illusions are performed, was a rather dispiriting exercise. As Sherlock Holmes pointed out, he preferred not to tell Watson how he did it because he knew the response would always be, "Oh . . . is that all?" Agent Skinner from the X-Files ("Hi, I'm Mitch Pileggi") was the presenter.

"You are about to see one of the world's top magicians break his code of silence. You will not hear him speak or even see his face. He will only be known as The Masked Magician. If our magician's identity is revealed, he may be blackballed from the magic community. It could mean the end of his career. We are really not sure," he puzzled away, "why a well-known magician would go on TV to expose these deep dark secrets." Don't tell me. Let me hazard a wild guess. Money.

For a show which was going to come clean about conjuring, there was a lot of bogus secrecy. An abandoned warehouse at dead of night, the magician in a death mask.

For many tricks — sawing the lady in half, turning a woman into a tiger — we should be applauding the girl not the conjuror. She must be slim and supple enough to fit into secret compartments. Few magicians, you may have noticed, favour a nobly proportioned assistant. As Mitch explained, when the magician puts the girl in a box and thrusts blades through it, "All she does is turn sideways and suck her stomach in." I tell you that girl had no stomach. You could have played Yankee Doodle on her ribcage.

The reason a magician pulls a rabbit from his hat instead of, say, an aardvark, is that a baby rabbit naturally sits perfectly still. Flopsy was hanging behind the conjuror's table, trussed up in a black hankie, ("Don't worry, the rabbit is perfectly comfortable") ready to be popped into the top hat as required.

As slimness was obviously such an advantage, I was looking forward to the vanishing elephant trick. No sucking in the stomach here. No hiding in a false floor. No trying to nip off unobtrusively wearing a wig.

The trick — I told you you would be disappointed — is done with mirrors. The elephant was led into a fenced enclosure. ("In case you're wondering, that's a real elephant.") You could see the elephant between the fence posts. A thunder flash and a cloud of smoke concealed that fact that mirrors had moved to fill the gaps between the posts. This works equally well with any large object.

Michelle ("The elastic adagio dancer") in *The Cruise* (BBC1) would make a first rate magician's assistant. Her partner ("The powerful Philip from South Africa") flings her around with abandon and no visible ill effects in the ship's show ("The new musical extravaganza").

Being apparently filleted, Michelle is immune to the disasters which struck the show. Powerful Philip hurt his bottom (there must be a more medical term for this) and retired wounded. Plucky Cees from Holland broke his toe but gamely volunteered to fly in the show as you don't need feet for that. With spirit worthy of a better cause, everyone agreed the show must go on. The compere ("The show must go on!"), the chief dancer ("The show must go on!"), the singer ("The show must go on!"). "What's that again about the show must er . . ." said the stage manager, who was either an ironist or not paying attention.

I cannot, my dears, convey my sense of relief when I realise I don't have to cruise on the Galaxy or stay at the Adelphi or live in Brookside or suffer Casualty or ever experience any telly at first hand. Ever.

Fish that's had its chips

Richard Cook

Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World
by Mark Kurlansky
Cape 294pp £12.99

IN 1992, Mark Kurlansky tells us, the Canadian government closed the Grand Banks to fishing. For most of the previous 500 years these feeding grounds off the coast of Newfoundland had been a revelation — the most fecund source of cod in the whole world.

"The Sea there is swimming with fish which can be taken not only with the net but in baskets let down with a stone," is how the area was first described to the Duke of Milan, who had financed John Cabot's expedition to this magical new fishing find in the 15th century. And all the fishing done in the centuries before our mechanical age had done little to alter that picture. Then suddenly there was nothing. Fishermen in Newfoundland now wait tables, drive taxis and draw benefit.

It's a sad story. Yet for all the waste, for all Man's fast-developing practical ingenuity in separating this omnivorous fish from its home on the ocean beds, it is still hard to grasp how it could have happened.

A moderately sized female cod produces 3 million eggs in a single spawning. The species is exceptionally disease-and-parasite resistant and has few predators — other than humans — in the deep. The cod might live to be 20 or 30 years old. If, in that time, each female cod produces just two fish that survive to be sexually mature, the population is stable. If, in other words, we can kill this off — as we undoubtedly can — there can be little we can't destroy.

The story of cod is fast becoming an obituary. Old-time fishermen talk of the seas of even 50 years ago bulging with fish. They can remember days when all they needed to do to find the fish was to use their eyes. They would simply point the boat's prow in the direction of feasting seagulls. Now banks of sophisticated electronics on the ship's bridge painstakingly hunt down the dwindling stocks that remain.

We are living through the spectacular implosion of something that had a resonance in the lives of nations, not just of men. Although Kurlansky starts by introducing us to former Newfoundland fishermen, he hasn't written an elegy to the dangerous, reckless and increasingly destructive profession of the fisherman.

Cod is subtitled "A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World," and it is the fish's former importance to trade and social development with which Kurlansky is chiefly concerned. Certainly, at least if we accept his world view, this was considerable.

The Pilgrim Fathers, for example, chose the inhospitable New England coast for their settlement ahead of South America chiefly because of stories of the abundance of fish in the region. The American Revolution was really fought as a reaction to a British clampdown on the molasses-saltfish trade between New England and the West Indies, while the insistence of founding father John Adams that Massachusetts had fishing rights to the Grand Banks sowed the very first seeds of the simmering north-south divide.

Kurlansky takes the story on through the mechanical improvements in fishing that have helped hasten the decline of fish stocks, past the three cod wars between the UK, its unlikely ally Germany and Iceland, and on past even the closure of the Grand Banks. His description of the bitter battle between the Spanish fleet and the fishermen of Newlyn in Cornwall three years ago offers a snapshot of how far the industry has fallen, and how fast.

In fact the Spanish have the most important place in this story. It was Basque fishermen, after all, who discovered the Grand Banks and Spanish demand for salt cod that largely sustained the whole cod-based economy for centuries. There's still a Spanish colloquialism for the guy in charge — "lo que corta el bacalao", or the person who cuts the salt cod.

It is a safe bet that the saying, like the fish itself, will become rarer and more difficult to find. The book is punctuated by recipes culled from the past 500 years of cod fishing. The last of these is entitled, "How to cook the last large cod". It's a good recipe, and as a last word on an industry humbled by a combination of waste, greed and progress, it's a recipe that should be engraved on every cod fisherman's heart.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £10 contact CultureShop (see below)

Lawrence at his last

D J Taylor

D H Lawrence: Dying Game 1922-1930
by David Ellis
Cambridge University Press 780pp £35

BY SOME distance the most arresting of Dying Game's many arresting remarks (nearly all of them, it has to be said, direct quotation from the subject) comes courtesy of Adele Seltzer, the wife of Lawrence's hard-pressed American publisher. Bidden to spend Christmas on the Lawrences' ranch in New Mexico, Mrs Seltzer broke out into raptures of gratified humility. "Lawrence is a titan," she said, "and I go about with an ever present sense of wonder that we, Thomas and I, little, little Jews, should be the publisher of the great English giant of this age . . .".

Even allowing for the extreme reactions which Lawrence tended to inspire in the people who rubbed up against him, there is something slightly disheartening, three-quarters of a century later, in this kind of self-abasement, the offering up of everything — race, personal consequence — on the altar of Lawrence's herculean sense of himself. Would it have been better for Lawrence if admirers such as the Seltzers had treated him as an ordinary person? More important, perhaps, as the critico-biographical tide continues to lap around this modern icon, would it have been better for us?

Doubtless the "ordinary person" card is a foolish one to play in the case of a writer whom no amount of disparagement has ever quite managed to displace from the upper shelf of 20th century literary iconography. Ever since the 1930s, and the first rush of memoirs and memorabilia, the literary world has swarmed with people for whom belief in the rightness, or at least the relevance, of Lawrence's opinions is practically an article of faith.

David Ellis's Dying Game is a study in personality: a fierce, autonomous personality, distinguished, and occasionally cast down, by an absolute refusal to compromise. Moving towards his late 30s, hard up, far from well, exiled from England, everything, according to a friend, "sent him into convulsive loss of self-control". Ominously, everything turns out to include Frieda, whose cigarette consumption infuriated him to the point of violence, and a pet dog named Pips who was unwise enough to transfer her allegiance to a third party. "So there you are you dirty, false little bitch," Lawrence is supposed to have exclaimed, before administering a sound thrashing.

Given the constant changes of location in the last eight years of Lawrence's life, Frieda seems to have been the only settled target for his asperity, and even she jumped ship at one point for a fling with Middleton Murry. These, as Ellis shows in almost inordinate detail, were the wandering years: Sri Lanka, Australia, New Mexico, a brief return to London, back across the Atlantic. Nearly every trip conformed to a stifling pattern: initial raptures over the change of scene, the gathering of a circle of friends and hangers-on followed by disillusion, a falling out and another upheaval. Written on the hoof, many of the books (Kangaroo, The Plumed Serpent and Lady Chatterley's Lover date from this period) reflect both these hastily assimilated impressions and a much deeper refusal to be beholden.

Ill-health, of course, played its part in raising Lawrence to his awesome pitch of rebarbativeness. Lawrence being Lawrence, his reaction to the tuberculosis that tore apart his lungs is a mixture of fury and wilful disregard (like many another consumptive he ignored the bloody handkerchief and insisted that the trouble was "bronchial"). At the same time a dreadful self-awareness rises from Ellis's account of the solitary sea bather who feared that his puny physique might be mocked, or the wistful short pieces about strapping, unintellectual types brawnily bringing in the hay.



From the opening voyage east to the final obsequies near Venice early in 1930, Ellis is an indefatigable chronicler of this tense, fretful and one does not suppose particularly happy life. Not a step taken through the Sri Lankan undergrowth, not the drawing of a single consumptive breath is denied its mitigating gloss, and the minute descriptions of the Mexican scenery, at least, suggest that this was a literal retracing of the footsteps.

Though never less than scrupulous, and often sharply critical of his subject's foibles, Ellis is content to let the wackier pronouncements go mostly unchallenged. At best these seem not much more than a kind of flailing; at worst (the comment that Joyce and Dorothy Richardson were only concerned with the minutiae of their own personalities) an unwitting analysis of his own temperamental excesses.

Lawrence's handicap, was his deracination, his detachment at a comparatively early stage in his existence from nearly everything that had given it substance. As Orwell once pointed out, there were two classic types of early 20th century working-class self-advancement: the improving, scholarship-winning kind, and people like Lawrence. But the fascinations of this abrupt, jerky and at times oddly inhuman progress remain, even in a book that might more aptly have been titled "Lawrence: The Blue Guide".

Thrillers

Chris Petit

Jade Lady Burning by Martin Limon (Serpent's Tail, £7.99)

BASCOM and Sueno are ill-disciplined army cops investigating the death of a prostitute in Seoul's red light district, frequented by US servicemen. Limon served 10 years in Korea and it shows in his detail. While the plot is conventional — uncovering kickbacks and cover-ups — there is pleasure to be had in the descriptions of off-limits lives.

The Buddha of Brewer Street by Michael Dobbs (HarperCollins, £16.99)

AN INFANT, imperilled Dalai Lama and an MP of indeterminate political hue on a bike doesn't promise much by way of pace and so it proves in an intermittently enjoyable tale of Chinese baddies hunting Tibet's god-king hidden in London's Chinatown.

Aid and Comfort by Ted Allbeury (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99)

ALLBEURY'S casebook investigation, inspired by the activities of the American spy Aldrich Ames, is played out almost casually as the cold war draws to an end. Though the KGB still shoots those that disappoint, it shows a more humane face to the West in the form of Volkov, controller of Casey, the feckless American spy who sells names for cash. Meanwhile the CIA is seen in by now familiar disarray.

Silent City by James Kennedy (Heinemann, £10)

IRISH Jews, the Luftwaffe's bombing of Dublin in 1941, and the dubious provenance of a rightwing charity are the intriguing elements of a thriller that never quite gels, in spite of several set-piece chases in the Hitchcock mould and some efficient cross-cutting.

The Flower Net by Lisa See (Century, £10)

A FROZEN winter death in a public space, exotic locale (Ch…) and a plot concerning the illeg… trade of wildlife products are evidence of this novice author's debt to Gorky Park. That said, See does enough to make the story her own, though after a strong start her plotting is increasingly predictable.

Hung Jury by Rankin Davis (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99)

NOBBLED jury deliberates over the apparently cut-and-dried case of the murder of an eminent scientist, unaware that the Attorney General has been kidnapped by terrorists with an eye to the same result. An OK countdown plot.

State of the nation

Norman Stone

The Warrior's Honour: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience
by Michael Ignatieff
Chatto 207pp £10.99

LIBERALS have always had terrible trouble with nationalism. Gladstone had schoolchildren whipped for speaking Welsh in the playground, arguing that it was anti-educational; John Stuart Mill, and his predecessors in 18th century Scotland, regarded Highlanders as wild and grunting; only Mother Church had much time for national minorities such as Flemings or Catalans.

Marxists were not keen on them, either. Marx himself expected them to be exterminated, though he may not have meant this literally, by progress. Communists later used minorities, as happened with, say, the "Macedonians" in the Greek civil war. But nationalism was always a bugbear for them in the end, and the post-Marxists simply say that anything that calls itself a nation might as well be treated as such.

We are now in such a state of abject surrender to the principle of nationality that we allow our bureaucrats more or less to invent the things. In Strasbourg, street signs are now doubled, not in German, which would be obvious enough, but in Alsatian dialect.

Many influences have gone into the making of Michael Ignatieff, but there are two important imperial ones, which make him, under the surface, a bit impatient with tinpot nationalism. His name is not just Russian, but aristocratic Russian: an ancestor was one of the great Pan-Slav heroes, liberator of the Balkans, and his grandparents were heroes in a different way, doing more for education in Russia than anyone before or since (he wrote a very good book about them). Ignatieff has not forgotten his Russian past, and, in this book of essays about ethnic conflict, he spends much of his time with the Serbs, fighting their wars in Croatia and Bosnia. The tug of Orthodox nationalism is fairly evident.

There is, though, another Ignatieff, this time a Canadian, a liberal believer in law. Nationalisms, as he encounters them across the globe, get some sympathy from him, and he writes well about his travels in various trouble-spots, for instance in Afghanistan or Africa, where he saw the horrors of Rwanda.

He describes, neatly, a journey with poor old Boutros-Ghali, in a lavish aircraft, where United Nations bureaucrats desperately try to convince themselves that the people of Sarajevo are actually rather lucky in comparison with citizens of many places elsewhere (a remark that Boutros-Ghali, who must have been very, very jet-lagged, made in Sarajevo in the middle of the siege).

This sort of Canadian is all very well on other people's problems, and on things that happened long ago. General Lewis Mackenzie, a Canadian sent in the very first instance to keep the peace in Bosnia, soon distinguished himself by adopting what amounted to a Serb-appeasing line. Canadians, just recently, have "apologised" to Eskimos and Red Indians for misdeeds centuries ago. Said tribes then wondered whether they might have their lands back. Apology proved, at that, to have its limits.

There are similar limits to Ignatieff's sympathies with nationalism, because he draws the line, in my opinion rightly, at Quebec. Canada works quite well as a country as it is, and why should Quebec rock the boat in order to become a sort of snowy Haiti? Rather weakly, Ignatieff says that nationalism is justified when someone is trying to massacre it — thus Serbs and Croats pass the test, but what does he make of Palestinians, Flemish and Catalans (or Scots or Northern Irish)? He does not say.

But there is another side to the Canadians, and it is a solid, practical sense. The best essay in Ignatieff's collection is on the Red Cross, from its beginnings in the middle of the 19th century. Here, there is some solid reading, and a story to tell. In yesterday's wars, everyone respected the Red Cross, even Hitler. (It is, incidentally, not the case that the Red Cross was forbidden to visit concentration camps. It went to Theresienstadt, and did not notice anything wrong.) In recent years, that respect has seemed less evident.

As Ignatieff says, this argues that the Red Cross could only really work in a Europe that observed certain ground-rules. Nowadays, things are different. So what do we do about the ethnic horrors that appear on our screens? But is the whole problem not just a straightforward one, of distinguishing between good and bad? Liberals, here, suffer from relativism; Orwell accused them of power-worship. That relativism did dreadful damage to the British performance in Bosnia. How often did we hear that that the Croats were as bad as the Serbs (like saying that the Poles of 1939 were equivalent to Hitler) or that the Muslims were massacring themselves. Ignatieff himself — and this does him credit, given that he has tugs in Orthodox-nationalist directions — recognises that something evil was going on in Serbia. He deserves honour for that, and for this book.

Learning the lessons of war: children at play in Bosnia PHOTO: ROGER HUTCHINGS/NETWORK

Do you take this child molester . . . ?

Kit Spring

Telling Liddy
by Anne Fine
Bantam 206pp £15.99

LIDDY is dizzy, attractive, loved by everyone, with a "coltish, giggling gift for easy living". Her husband has left her with two small children, but she is madly in love with the wonderful George. Who ever would want to "stick a meddling finger in her happiness"? Her sister, Bridie, that's who — and, what's more, with the best possible intentions.

This new novel by Anne Fine is an entertaining and revealing account of the complicated emotional structure of an extended family, and the possessiveness, jealousy, neglect and betrayal that can arise without anyone actually meaning to do any harm. It is also a fine social satire on middle-class life. (Its subtitle is "A Sour Comedy"). Fine's observation is sharp, but not cruel, her perspective amused rather than bitter; her account of how wrong things can go when you interfere in someone's life without really understanding your own motives is scarily convincing. She understands people horribly well.

Telling Liddy is Fine's fourth novel for adults, although she is still best known for her acclaimed children's fiction, her many successes including Goggle Eyes and Madam Doubtfire. It is rare for authors to have a sure touch for writing books for two different generations, but Fine succeeds.

The main character in the story is Bridie Palmer. There are four Palmer sisters — Heather has a high-powered career in finance, Stella ("Our Lady of Colour Co-ordination") is a House Beautiful sort of housewife, Bridie is a social worker, Liddy is just Liddy — and they are very close.

Everything seems perfect, but Bridie discovers that Stella and Heather have kept a secret from her for some months that involves Liddy's George. She is as hurt by their failure to tell her as she is appalled by the revelation. She says: "I still don't see why one or the other of you couldn't have mentioned it."

"Mentioned it? It's not just something you mention, is it? It's pretty big after all. The man has a court case behind him. Old Mrs Moffat knows someone who knows that George was dragged into court for supposedly putting his fingers up some kid's swimsuit in a public pool. And Daisy and Edward climb on this bloke's knee to have a cuddle 20 times a day. It's not just something you mention."

Bridie couldn't help wondering how she'd ended up in the wrong:

The case was not proven and Bridie would put good money on George's innocence, but thinks Liddy should be told. "She'd bet the roof that, in this case, 'not proven' meant 'not guilty'. But everyone has a job to do and this was hers." Bridie's decision to force her unwilling sisters to join her in telling Liddy is precipitated by the announcement of Liddy and George's wedding, and has far-reaching consequences for everyone. The sisters' apparently impregnable relationship starts to break down, and Bridie herself starts to fall apart.

The main theme is Bridie's gradual moral corruption as her hurt at being left out turns first to indignation, then bitterness, then fury and jealousy.

This is a novel with more than one twist in the plot. Bridie's new feelings lead to her uncovering yet another family secret — and this one involves her husband Dennis. Energised and elated in a strange kind of way by her grief and rage, she drives north to find out the truth about George. She delivers the result of that journey at George and Liddy's wedding with surprising and devastating results.

This lively, funny novel is one of those books that makes you wince with delight at, and horrified recognition of, Anne Fine's talent at peeling away our carefully maintained ideas of ourselves and at wrapping interesting characters up in an intriguing plot. You'll read it quickly — and it'll leave you satisfied.

Apocalyptic aesthete

Elaine Showalter

Bear & His Daughter
by Robert Stone
Bloomsbury 222pp £15.99

THE style of the American novelist Robert Stone has always been an aggressive post-Vietnamese mix of the literary and the laconic, half professorial poetic allusion, half hard-boiled understatement. Stone's apocalyptic aestheticism was most effective and idiosyncratic in his award-winning Dog Soldiers (1973), which includes the great line "It tolls for thee, mother-fucker"; and his unusual combination of post-Vietnam, drugged-out, end-of-the-world nihilism and eclectic literary sensibility makes him one of the most interesting novelists on the current scene.

In Children Of The Light (1985), Stone updated Kate Chopin's classic feminist novel The Awakening in contemporary terms. His heroes and heroines are ruined idealists who witness the darkest tragi-comedies of the *fin de siècle* American dream. But if Stone's literary tastes range impressively wide, they are usually much closer to the macho minimalism of Hemingway and Raymond Carver than to the female lyricism of Chopin.

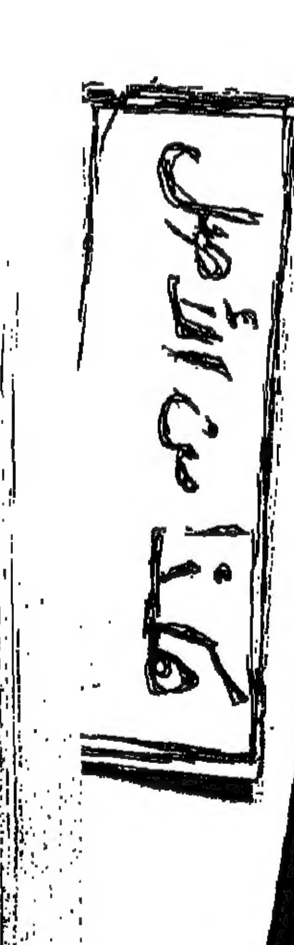
Stone is unbeatable at lean, mean dialogue, scoring and scorpions in Third World nightmare cities of dregs and drugs, braggers and beggars. Bear & His Daughter is a collection of seven short stories written since 1969. They are characterised by the themes of violence, corruption, despair and compulsion but, with one exception, are less powerful in their truncated form than his novels.

Even the title, with its impatient ampersand and its old-man-and-the-sea rhythm, seems parodic of Papa Hemingway.

The exception is "Helping", the pivotal story in the book, already an anthologised classic, with its grim take on the recovering alcoholic's theme of "one day at a time" and its quintessential Stone hero, the alcoholic Vietnam vet Elliot and his symbolically named social worker wife, Grace.

Elliot is also a social worker and a classicist manqué whose preferred reading comes straight from the waste land — even The Golden Bough — but his bleak cynicism ("I suppose child abuse is something people can do together," he tells Grace) and rage are wholly contemporary. The story works in part because its stark New Zealand background makes a strong contrast to Elliot's slide into craziness, and because Stone concentrates on the psychology of his protagonist, using the other characters — Elliot's whiny client Blankenship and his clean-living neighbour Anderson — as alter egos.

With the vogue for Tarantino, James Ellroy and Trainspotting, Stone's sinister humour has to work harder to shock than it used to, and the stories themselves do not point to a new direction for his writing. At his best, Stone needs space to lure the reader into his haunted world. But even these second-tier texts will be required reading for Stone fans, and will do to fill the time until we get his next novel, with the much more promising title of Damascus Gate.



Fishing for compliments

Paul Evans

IT WAS the sort of cold wet winter day that gets into your bones. The grey sky hid the sun like an old tin fence, and the fields which rolled away into a grimy haze in all directions were sodden and lifeless. In the gaunt, dead branches of an oak, a gang of apocalyptic figures surveyed the world disdainfully with murder in their dark hearts. The "black plague" had arrived.

The figures in the oak tree were cormorants, known to anglers as the "black plague" because they stand accused of destroying fish stocks. Age-old prejudices against this bird are mounting as the cormorant population increases, and anglers are baying for their blood. "These birds must be killed" screamed a headline in last year's Angling Times, which was followed by a petition calling for the UK government to remove the cormorant's legal protection. The birds I saw roosting belong to the Atlantic subspecies of cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*, which nest mostly around the coasts of Britain, Ireland and Norway. This seemed an odd sight, 100 miles from the sea and several miles from the nearest river, but only because cormorants were shot out of inland areas in the last century. Gradually, thanks to legal protection, they have begun to return to these areas and it's only within the past few years that anglers have started to get hysterical about them.

Cormorants are fabulous fishers, and jealous anglers claim that their impact on inland fisheries is disastrous. However, evidence that cormorants are really the "black plague" they're cracked up to be is sketchy. There is also disagreement about the numbers of nesting birds and the way fish stocks are affected. Anglers and conservationists are squaring up over cormorants and much hinges on the results of a £1 million study into fish-eating birds and fisheries over the next few years. In the meantime the slaughter of cormorants continues with illegal culls.


ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Perhaps it is in the nature of hunting cultures, and angling is surely a very popular modern form, that they need their demons — enemies to rally against, fears to share. In the absence of other persecuted predators, the cormorant provides such a scapegoat. There's something gothic about the way they pose, with their wings half-folded, their snake-like necks and long, hook-tipped beaks, like the demonic gargoyles of medieval churches. They seem more reptilian than many birds; they're gregarious, and of course they're black. Though few anglers would openly admit it, this sort of strangeness together with their colour leads to "black devils" and "black plague" and other barely disguised racist epithets.

It's not just British anglers that are bothered about cormorants. In Europe, New Zealand and North America fishermen have protested against them. In Japan there is an ancient tradition of fishing with cormorants, and tethered birds dive from boats to catch fish. The 17th century poet Basho wrote of this practice:

Cormorant fishing
how stirring,
how saddening.

Their plight today is surely saddening — that their climb back from persecution should be met by calls for further persecution by those guarding their own selfish enjoyment of a "sport".

Chess Leonard Barden

MATTHEW Sadler's victory at Hastings a few weeks ago was overshadowed by the Fide world championship, and even Luke McShane's debut in the Premier at the age of 13, breaking Nigel Short's age record, attracted little attention. McShane found it hard going, but his 3/9 total was only marginally below his expected score based on Fide ratings, and he played one of the most visual moves of the tournament.

McShane v Plaskett

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nb5 d6 6 Bf4 e5 7 Be3 Be6?! A dubious move order. If first Nf6 then 8 Nd2 is met by Ng4. **8 Nd2!? Nf6 9 Bg5 d5 10 exd5 Bxd5 11 Bxf6 gxf6 12 Bc4** Highlighting Black's central weakness; the white knights threaten to invade at c7 or d6.

Rc8 13 Qg4! A nasty sortie to meet so early in the game. White threatens to win a piece by 14 Bxd5 and also prepares to meet a6 by 14 Bxd5 axb5 15 0-0-0 and Ne4 when more pieces join the attack.

Bxc4 14 Nxc4 Nd4 Giving up the exchange, after which Black could already resign. If Rb8 15 Rd1 and the BQ cannot reasonably guard d2.

15 Ncd6+ Bxd6 16 Nxd6+ Ke7 17 Nxc8+ Qxc8 18 Qxc8 Rxc8 19 Rc1 Rxc2 20 Rxc2 Nxc2+ 21 Kd2 Nb4 22 Rc1 Nc6 23 Rc3 Resigns.

Hastings Council gives its traditional congress generous support, and the organisers make imaginative efforts to increase its scope, notably by the World Amateur, with its 60 entrants from 20 countries and a UK world champion, 14-year-old Rosalind Kieran from Bexley, in the women's section.

Yet in comparison with the rival Dutch congress sponsored by Hoogovens Steel at Wijk aan Zee, Hastings is the poor relation. Wijk's entry list included Karpov, Anand, Adams, Kramnik and Judit Polgar, while Prins Willem Alexander, the heir to the throne, performed the official opening. Earlier, the Dutch minister for culture opened the Groningen Fide world knock-out. At national level, chess in the Netherlands counts as "denksport" and is generously backed; the British government's small grant to chess is increasingly subject to restrictive conditions.

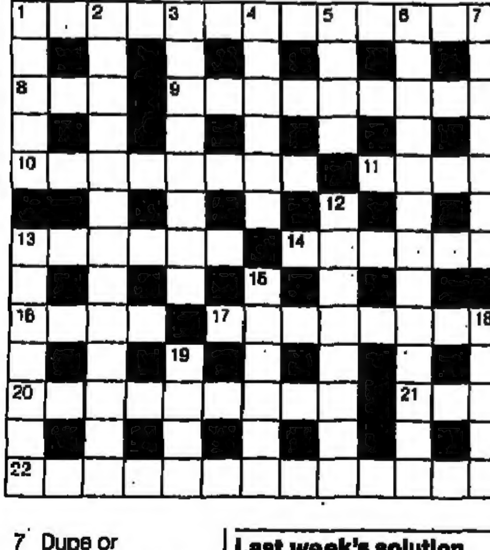
The irony is that Britain, not the Netherlands, is the only western European country that, via the trio of Adams, Short and Sadler, can realistically challenge the Russians and Americans, and has possible future world contenders such as McShane and our best nine- and seven-year-olds. Chess is still cheap, and £150,000 — just 0.02 per cent of the Millennium Dome funds — would make a real difference.

No 2510

D Bronstein v R Vedder, Hoogeveen Open, Netherlands 1997. At 73, former world title challenger Bronstein still has a quick tactical eye. Here he's a piece down with his queen and both rooks all attacked. How did White (to play) win quickly?

No 2509: 1 . . . Qxg5 2 hxg5 Rxh2+ 3 Kxh2 Bd6+ 4 Kh1 Rh6 mate.

Quick crossword no. 405



Across

1,8 "Rough winds do shake the ——" (Shakespeare) (7,4,2,3)
9 Large thin fish (6,3)
10 One who makes his pick (8)
11 Male beast (4)
13 Covering (eg of forest) (6)
14 Jovial (6)
16 Marine vessel (4)
17 Immunising agents (8)
20 Unlimited hospitality (4,5)
21 Weep (3)
22 Cover against conflagration (4,9)

Down

1 One is down in them (5)
2 Sapper (5,8)
3 Rock and lighthouse off Fife (8)
4 Retriever (3,3)
5 Employed (4)
6 TV's rag-and-bone-men (7,3,3)
7 Dupe or scapegoat (4,3)
12 Blow to the head as punishment (5,3)
13 Reject — untie — stop knitting (4,3)
15 French underground (6)
18 Black or brown (fur) (5)
19 Siamese (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

THERE was a large entry for the Christmas competition, and the standard was higher than in previous years — a remarkable achievement, since the problems were among the hardest I have ever set. Perhaps that's because they were taken from real life; hands at the table don't fall into any pre-defined category. This week, I'll discuss the first three problems — remember that the form of scoring was rubber bridge, and the vulnerability was Game All in every case.

South	West	North	East
		1♥	1♠
?			

♠A 10 6 5 ♥Q 9 2 ♦K 9 8 3 2 ♣4

You were asked to rank double, 1NT and 2♥ in order of preference. Double attracted a lot of votes, which made me wonder whether you were seeking fresh outlets for your bloodlust now that beef on the bone is banned! It could work, generating a sizeable penalty double — though it's usually wrong to make a low-level penalty double on a marginal hand when you have support for partner's suit. North would have no reason to remove the double on a hand such as:

♠4 ♥AKJ76 ♦AQ65 ♣J92

and you would watch the opponents rack up an overtrick or two in one spade doubled with a game in hearts cold your way. I think that 2♥ is clearly preferable to 1NT. Your hand is worth a lot more in support of hearts than it's worth in a no-trump contract. So I'd rank the possibilities 2♥, 1NT, double.

South	West	North	East
?			

♠Q 10 9 8 7 3 ♥AKQ4 ♦AK ♣A

You were asked to rank 1♠, 2♣ and 2♠ in order. You really can't risk opening this monster at the one level and hearing everybody pass. This hand is worth a 2♣ opening, forcing to game and allowing the auction to develop naturally (2♣-2♦-2♠-2NT-3♥ is a likely sequence, leaving partner well placed to judge future prospects). Even if you play an opening bid of 2♠ as forcing for one round — the "modern" rather than the "ancient" flavour of Acol — I think that sequences such as 2♠-2NT-3♥ are best kept for hands where the two suits are of real quality. My answer would be: 2♣, 2♠, 1♠.

South	West	North	East
			1♦
?			

♠J 8 6 5 2 ♥AKJ 10 4 ♦AQ ♣[illegible]

You were asked to consider double, 1♥ and 1♠. Double has little to recommend it — with a two-suiter, start bidding your suits before they jump to 3♦ and fix you completely.

If you were given this hand as an opening bid problem, I'm sure you'd all vote for 1♠. But when East opens the bidding, new factors enter the equation. For example, if West happens to become declarer in a no-trump contract, you'd want partner to lead hearts, not spades.

And if partner has very little, so that you're about to be doubled and go down, you'd prefer your robust hearts to your feeble spades as trumps (to say nothing of the 150 honours).

However, my feeling is that when your hand is as good as this, you should try to bid it naturally and not worry about ending up as a defender or being doubled. Replace the ♦A with a small one and I'd be all in favour of 1♥. Here, it's close, but I would rank the choices 1♠, 1♥, double.

Cricket Second Test West Indies v England

West Indies keep their Cool to win

Mike Selvey in Port of Spain

THE curse of Trinidad struck England again last Monday when West Indies, against all the odds and with a depth of character which many thought might be beyond this side, won the second Test by three wickets.

Asked to make 282 to win, the highest score of the match, they dragged themselves from the depths of 124 for five on Sunday afternoon — and 181 for five overnight — to attain their goal 20 minutes after lunch. England managed only two wickets, both to Dean Headley immediately before the interval.

Trinidad requires little encouragement for excess at this carnival time of year and the toast was Carl Hooper and the diminutive wicketkeeper David Williams, Trinidadian himself; their sixth-wicket partnership of 129 had carried West Indies to within spitting distance of victory.

Cool Carl, vice-captain now and with the responsibilities that go with it, cast off his impetuous role to bat for 10 minutes short of six hours in making an unbeaten 94.

Faced with a pitch that had dominated the game and on which no batsman felt secure, he compiled a chanceless innings. He hit the winning runs, catching Phil Tufnell's looping spin on the full and easing it past mid-off. It was his 10th boundary and, with a nice symmetry, virtually a replica of his first, struck almost 24 hours previously.

Hooper raised his arms wearily in triumph, took the acclaim and strode off into a bear-hug from captain Brian Lara. Mike Atherton confessed the game had been "thrown away". He was not wrong.

When the fourth day began, England were 242 ahead, on a poor pitch with six second-innings wickets in hand. That should have been their springboard. But they collapsed against Curtly Ambrose armed with an old ball and then, when the indefatigable Angus Fraser had pulled them back into the match, allowed the fish to slip from the hook.

Fraser's contribution was immense, from his stout 90-minute rearguard in England's first innings to his magnificent eight for 53 in the first innings and his three wickets in the second. With 11 for 110 in the match, he did not deserve to lose.

Yet the paradox is that he might have won the game with the first ball of the day on the Monday. It was a loosener, which Williams chipped gently back to the bowler's right. Fraser stuck out a huge hand but the ball tumbled to earth. Later, with 75 still needed, Jack Russell, whose errors have cost England dearly in the Caribbean in the past, missed Williams down the leg side in Fraser's first over with the new ball. Had the second chance been taken, England ought to have won; had the first stuck, there is little doubt they would.

Perhaps the most poignant comment on the day, however, came when Atherton, with 11 runs needed and all patience lost with his other seamers, called Fraser back for a final fling. His first ball kept low, scuttled through to Russell, who then let it through his legs. The ball hit Russell's helmet, placed on the ground behind him, and five byes were the result.

England: 214 and 258;
West Indies: 191 and 282 for 7.
West Indies won by three wickets


The eyes have it . . . skipper Mike Atherton and Nasser Hussain reflect on England's defeat PHOTOGRAPH: LAWRENCE GRIFFITHS

England A OK

ENGLAND's last man, Paul Hutchison, claimed he had never attempted a sweep shot in a competitive match in his life, but there is a first time for everything. He took a deep breath, made an awkward connection and scraped the single that pulled off a thrilling victory for the A side against Sri Lanka in the second Test last Monday by one wicket with only two balls to spare, *writes David Hopps in Matara.*

The sweep shot had figured prominently in England's chase of 192 in 49 overs after Sri Lanka had surprisingly declared at 280 for 9 in their second innings. Earlier Sri Lanka's first innings total of 171 had been eclipsed by an England reply of 260 which included Ben Hollioake's maiden first-class century.

Football Premiership

Arsenal all guns blazing

David Lacey

THE sound of some distant though familiar guns may already be haunting Manchester United. Arsenal, who were the champions' closest pursuers until early November, are again closing on the leaders.

Although last Sunday's comfortable, if combustible, 2-0 victory at Highbury over Ruud Gullit's drifting Chelsea side did not improve Arsenal's league position, it did strengthen their challenge. The two goals from Stephen Hughes have brought them to within six points of United with a match in hand and they are now only one behind Chelsea, Liverpool and Blackburn Rovers.

With all three of Manchester United's immediate rivals beaten over the weekend, and their Premiership lead increased to five points by a scrambled 1-1 draw at home to struggling Bolton Wanderers, there would seem to be something in the theory that events are conspiring to bring Old Trafford its fifth championship in six seasons.

Certainly Chelsea left Highbury convinced that someone up there did not like them very much, although the principal object of their displeasure was the thoroughly earthly figure of Dermot Gallagher, the Banbury referee. After 12 minutes, with Arsenal already a goal up, Gallagher was content to caution Steve Bould after the defender had pulled Gianluca Vialli back by his shirt as the Italian surged on to an aberrant back-header from Emmanuel Petit. In the present climate most referees would have sent Bould off; Gallagher's decision, therefore, appeared quite perverse.

Unwisely Chelsea — who last September lost Frank Leboeuf for two bookable fouls on Dennis Bergkamp as Arsenal won 3-2 — allowed their indignation at Bould's continued presence to overrule their judgment. Until half-time they seemed set on little other than taking on Arsenal in a rough-house, and no team with any sense ever sets out to hustle the arch-hustlers.

The truth was that Arsenal were the masters in most areas. Gullit's midfield seldom got to grips with Stephen Hughes, Petit and the outstanding Ray Parlour, and hard though Mark Hughes worked up front he was frequently closed down by Arsenal defenders.

The opening goal, after three minutes, followed a mistake by Leboeuf, who failed to cut out a nod-down from Bergkamp and compounded the error by losing his footing. Nicolas Anelka then saw one shot beaten out by Ed De Goey and another blocked by Laurent Charvet, whose clearance was thumped back into the net by Stephen Hughes.

A lot of undistinguished, tetchy football followed until four minutes before half-time when Adams headed back Bergkamp's free-kick from the byline and Hughes's alert head glanced the ball past De Goey.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Arsenal 2, Chelsea 0; Barnsley 2, Everton 2; Blackburn Rovers 0, Tottenham 3; Coventry City 1, Sheff Wed 0; Crystal Palace 0, Wimbledon 3; Derby County 0, Aston Villa 1; Leicester City 1, Leeds Utd 0; Liverpool 2, Southampton 3; Manchester Utd 1, Bolton 1; Newcastle Utd 0, West Ham Utd 1.
Leading Positions: 1, Manchester Utd (played 25, points 50); 2, Chelsea (25-45); 3, Liverpool (25-45).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Division One: Birmingham 1, Middlesbro 1; Bradford C 1, Charlton 0; Bury 2, Port Vale 2; Huddersfld 1, Stockport 0; Norwich 0, Man City 0; Portsmth 0, Nottm For 1; QPR 3, Crewe 2; Reading 1, Tranmere 3, Sheff Utd 1, Oxford 0; Stoke 1, Ipswich 1; Swindon 0, WBA 2; Wolves 0, Sunderland 1.
Leading Positions: 1, Nottm Forest (30-60); 2, Middlesbrough (30-59); 3, Sunderland (29-55).

Division Two: Bournemth 1, Bristol City 0; Bristol R 3, Chesterfld 1; Fulham 2, Southend 0; Millwall 0, Grimsby 1; Oldham 0, Blackpool 1; Plymouth 2, Carlisle 1; Preston 2, Burnley 3; Watford 0, Gillingham 2; Wigan 1, Northmptn 1; Wrexham 2, Luton 1; Wycombe 0, Brentford 0; York 1, Walsall 0.
Leading Positions: 1, Watford (30-64); 2, Bristol City (31-61); 3, Fulham (30-48).

Division Three: Brighton 1, Torquay 4; Cambridge 2, Doncaster 1; Cardiff 0, Lincoln 1; Chester 0, Mansfield 1; Hartlepool 2, Darlington 2, Hull 0, Rochdale 2; Macclesfld 3, Scarboro 1; Notts Co 1, Shrewsbry 1; Rotherham 1, Exeter 0; Sc'thorpe 1, Barnet 1.
Leading Positions: 1, Notts County (31-66); 2, Barnet (31-53); 3, Peterborough (30-52).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Aberdeen 3, Hibernian 0; Dundee U 1, Motherwell 0; Hearts 1, Celtic 1; Kilmarnock 1, St Johnstone 0; Rangers 1, Dunfermline 1.
Leading Positions: 1, Rangers (24-49); 2, Celtic (24-49); 3, Hearts (24-49).

First Division: Airdrie 3, Hamilton 2; Falkirk 1, Morton 1; Raith 2, Partick 0; Stirling A 1, Dundee 3, St Mirren 3, Ayr 0.
Leading Positions: 1, Dundee (24-47); 2, Raith (24-42); 3, Falkirk (24-41).

Second Division: Brechin 2, East Fife 1; Livingston 4, Forfar 0; Queen Sth 0, Clyde 0; Stranraer 1, Stenhsmr 2; Inv CT 3, Clydbank 2.
Leading Positions: 1, Clydebank (21-41); 2, Livingston (20-36); 3, Queen of Sth (22-32).

Third Division: Albion 3, E Stirling 2; Alloa 2, Queens Pk 0; Cowdnbth 3, Arbroath 1; Dumbarton 0, Ross Co 1; Montrose 2, Berwick 2.
Leading Positions: 1, Alloa (22-43); 2, Arbroath (23-40); 3, Ross County (21-38).

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Shearer ends Stevenage's cup hopes

STEVENAGE BOROUGH'S FA Cup dream is over. The plucky non-league minnows made a dignified exit from the competition after being beaten 2-1 by Newcastle United in the fourth-round replay at St James' Park.

Two headed goals from Alan Shearer saw off Stevenage, who were missing striker Giuliano Grazioli, their scorer in the 1-1 draw in the first game. He lost a desperate fitness battle from an injury he sustained in an earlier match.

Shearer broke the deadlock in the 16th minute when he rose above the visitors' defence to net a curling cross from Alessandro Pistone. The England captain added a second in the 65th minute but the Magpies were given a fright when Gary Crawshaw got one back in the 74th minute.

Stevenage manager Paul Fairclough said after his side's defeat: "It was a very brave performance. We kept going and got a goal. It has been a wonderful journey and we have been particularly bold tonight."

Newcastle, who have spent a staggering $35 million on acquiring new players since Kenny Dalglish took over as manager just over a year ago, entertain Tranmere Rovers in the next round.

Barnsley meanwhile set up a fifth-round meeting with Manchester United at Old Trafford following a 3-1 victory over Tottenham Hotspur whose miserable season took another battering. To compound the London club's problems, Jurgen Klinsmann was taken to hospital with a broken jaw and could be out for the next five games.

In other replayed ties, Reading beat Cardiff 4-3 on penalties after their game ended 1-1. They next take on Sheffield United, who defeated Ipswich 1-0. Wolverhampton Wanderers disposed of Charlton Athletic 3-0.

JAMAICA, one of the least fancied teams in this summer's World Cup in France, caused a sensation by holding the world champions Brazil to a goalless draw in the Concacaf Gold Cup at Florida's Orange Bowl. "We were on a mission and showed Jamaica can play good football with a good football country," said their jubilant coach Rene Simoes, himself a Brazilian.

BATH and England prop Kevin Yates has received a six-month ban after being found guilty of ear-biting by the Rugby Football Union. The allegations arose out of an incident during last month's match against London Scottish which left Simon Fenn requiring 25 stitches. Yates has 14 days in which to appeal against the decision.

THE EIGHTEENTH Winter Olympics got under way in Nagano, Japan. In the growing tradition of all Games, they are bigger, more lavish and more heavily commercialised than any of their precessors. Olympic opening ceremonies are usually held in the evening, but for the first time in living memory, the Games opened when people in Japan were having their late breakfast. The shift was apparently designed to satisfy the prime-time slots of US television.

WELSH snooker star Mark Williams recovered from three down with four to play to beat Scotland's Stephen Hendry 10-9 and win the $236,000 first prize in the Benson & Hedges Masters at the Wembley Conference Centre. A tie-break black settled the deciding frame — the first time victory has been achieved in this way since John Spencer beat Ray Reardon for the inaugural Masters title in 1975.

FORMER world heavyweight champion Mike Tyson sacked his management team and told the promoter Don King he no longer wishes to fight for him after a bust-up outside a Los Angeles hotel. King has promoted Tyson for the past 10 years, and masterminded a comeback believed to have earned the boxer well over $200 million since he was released from prison after serving three years for a rape conviction. Tyson, rumoured to have money problems and tax debts, is holding King responsible for his cash-flow troubles.

IN ONE of the greatest triumphs of spirit, mind and body over adversity, Simon Parke became Britain's national squash champion. Two years ago he was suffering from cancer, and it was by no means certain that he would survive. But he went through chemotherapy, rehabilitation and all the dark depression to emerge victorious. Last week he beat Mark Chaloner 15-11, 15-11 15-13 in the final of the British national championships in Manchester. Parke is now ranked No 6 in the world.